Surprising Summer Wine Picks page 26

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THE WINNER

Spatter Screen Tortilla Steamer

When making breakfast burritos and other tortilla-based treats, my husband fashions his own tortilla steamer by setting a spatter screen over a large skillet filled with an inch of simmering water. He puts the tortillas on top one at a time and lets them steam, flipping as needed, until they're warm and supple.

—Anne Allgood, Seattle, Washington We want to hear from you. Send us your best tip and we'll pick a winner from all the entries. Anne is the winner of this Chef's Choice CALL OR WRITE: WaffleCone Fine Cooking, The Taunton Press, **Express nonstick** 63 S. Main St., PO Box 5506, waffle cone maker Newtown, CT 06470-5506. and an ice cream Tel: 203-426-8171: cone holder. email: fc@taunton.com.

Dinner for Breakfast

The Chili-Cheddar Grits with Grilled Corn and Tomatoes ("Going Meatless on the Grill," June/July) was great. We enjoyed it so much that the next morning, I cut the leftover grits into rounds and served them with poached eggs, cheese, and fresh chives on top.

—Julie Roedell, Santa Clara, California

Shortcake Acclaim

When I served the Classic Strawberry Shortcake (June/July), one of my dinner guests proclaimed it the best strawberry shortcake she had ever had. The shortcakes were unbelievably light and moist, and there was not a single bite left. I'm sure I will be making this again.

—Debbi Dodson, San Diego

Meals on Wheels

I'm from Thailand, and I'm always interested in articles about Asian food. Corinne Trang's Pad Thai recipe in your June/July issue is great, but I disagree with her claim that pad thai is considered a snack in Thailand. Visitors from other countries might consider our streetvendor food a snack because it isn't served at a restaurant table, but the average Thai person considers it a meal. When you walk through Bangkok, you will see people eating their breakfast, lunch, and even dinner with friends at collapsible tables that the owners of street-food carts have set out for them. It's an undeniably lovable part of our culture.

> -Pieangpat Charoenpitthaya-Sauls, Los Angeles

Fresh Perspective

I recently purchased CookFresh magazine (a Fine Cooking special recipe collection), and the recipes I've made from it are extraordinary. I loved that they turned out exactly as pictured. Showing how easy and beautiful eating healthfully can be is just what this country needs right now; thank you for educating the public about cooking healthy meals at home.

> -Maria Concilio, South Orange, New Jersey

Editors' reply: Glad to hear you're a fan of CookFresh. We have a second edition, focused on late summer and fall fruits and vegetables, coming out soon. It's packed with delicious ideas for making the most of the season's bounty, plus strategies to help you cook and eat lighter without sacrificing flavor. Watch your newsstand for CookFresh in mid-August, or you can order it now online at tauntonstore.com.

Brews Clues

I'm curious about your wheat beer article, "The Summer Beer" (June/July). Was there a reason you didn't mention two historically significant styles of wheat beer, Berliner weisse and gose?

—Thomas Keith, Chicago

Author Stephen Beaumont replies:

Although historically important, both Berliner weisse and gose are fringe styles today, and they're brewed only sporadically. This isn't to say, however, that we won't see a revival of these styles in the future.

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Southern California-based recipe developer Kristine Kidd ("Eggplant," page 64) has written six cookbooks; her latest, Williams-Sonoma Weeknight Fresh & Fast, was

published in January. She's also the food editor for the Monterey Bay Aquarium Seafood Watch website.

- My favorite comfort food is... huevos rancheros with lard-refried beans.
- My guilty food pleasure is... eating too many squares of dark chocolate every afternoon.
- The strangest thing I've ever eaten was... pig snout. I had to hide it under a lettuce leaf so the chef couldn't see that I had barely touched it.



Bruce Aidells ("Grilling Greats," page 36) is a chef, cookbook author, and meat and grilling expert. He has a Live Well Network television show, Good Cookin' with

Bruce Aidells, and has written 10 cookbooks, including The Complete Meat Cookbook and Bruce Aidells's Complete Book of Pork.

- Scrambled or fried?... Scrambled. The more butter, the better.
- My drink of choice is... Irish whiskey.
- The last thing I ate was... pork paella and an assortment of heirloom tomatoes.



Fine Cooking contributing editor and baking expert Abigail Johnson Dodge ("Skillet Cobblers," page 78), is the author of seven cookbooks, including

The Weekend Baker and Desserts 4 Today: Flavorful Desserts with Just Four Ingredients.

- My best meal in recent memory is... dinner at Michael's Genuine Food & Drink in Miami; I tried everything on the menu.
- The only fast food I'll eat is... pizza. Sometimes, a New York slice can really hit the spot.
- My favorite ice cream flavor is... buttered popcorn.



Dave DeWitt ("Hot Chiles," page 16), who lives in Albuquerque, New Mexico, is an authority on chile peppers and spicy foods. The co-founder of Chile

Pepper magazine, he's written more than 40 books, including The Complete Chile Pepper Book: A Gardener's Guide to Choosing, Growing, Preserving, and Cooking. He's also the owner and coproducer of the National Fiery Foods & Barbecue Show.

- To a summer cookout, I'd bring... lamb burgers with green chiles.
- My favorite comfort food is... red chile enchiladas.
- Three items that are always in my refrigerator are... two kinds of salsa and fat-free half-and-half.



Alder Yarrow ("Take a Summer Vacation, by Bottle," page 26) writes the wine blog vinography.com. He lives in San Francisco and runs Hydrant, a global

consulting and design firm.

- Sweet or savory?... Can't I have both? Bacon-studded English toffee? Chocolate-covered pretzels?
- If I weren't a wine writer. I'd be... a florist.
- My favorite ice cream flavor is... basil; it's my signature homemade flavor.



Robb Walsh ("Taco Night," page 56) is the author of The Tex-Mex Cookbook: a History in Recipes and Photos and The Tex-Mex Grill and Backyard Barba-

coa Cookbook, and a chef-owner of El Real Tex-Mex Cafe in Houston, Texas. He was the food critic at the Houston Press for 10 years.

- My dinner party specialty is... wild duck gumbo.
- The last thing I ate was... smoked brisket and scrambled egg breakfast tacos with pico de gallo.
- My biggest food-related pet peeve is... people who have food-related pet peeves.



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MARKETPLACE

Shop Smarter, Eat Better



Okra is a cousin of hibiscus

A member of the mallow family (which also includes hibiscus and cotton), okra grows in hot climates; the plants can reach up to 6 feet tall, and they have slender branches with long, serrated leaves. Large white and yellow hibiscus-like flowers bloom on the bushy plant before it produces the edible pods. These pods are harvested when they're 1 to 4 inches long (any larger, and they're tough). Sliced pods release a clear, thick liquid (this helps the plant store water) that can act as a natural thickener for soups and stews.

The most common variety of okra is Clemson Spineless, shown on page 11, which is green with subtle ridges and a conical stem end. Other varieties include the red-colored Burgundy and yellow-hued Blondy, though these are harder to find.

Buy it fresh, eat it fast

Look for brightly colored pods that are blemish-free, 2 to 4 inches long, and tender but not soft. Okra is best eaten within a few days of purchase. To store, refrigerate it in a plastic bag for up to three days.

Hit it with high heat

The trick to avoiding slimy okra is to cook it whole (try steaming) or to cook it quickly using a high-heat technique, like grilling or frying. When grilled, okra is crisp on the outside and tender on the inside (see the recipe at right); when sliced into rounds, coated in cornmeal, and fried, it's crunchy and faintly sweet.

Many iconic okra recipes take advantage of its thickening properties. Adding it to New Orleans gumbo gives this smoked meat, seafood, and vegetable stew its characteristic rich, hearty consistency. You can also simmer okra with tomatoes, fresh corn, and a handful of herbs for a side dish or add it to curries and braises.

Pair okra with salty-rich tasso, prosciutto, or bacon and fresh late-summer produce like sweet onions, tomatoes, corn, eggplant, and peppers. Punchy vinegars and warm spices like cumin, coriander, and black pepper lend depth to okra's mild flavor. -Evan Barbour



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Photographs by Scott Phillips; food styling by Abby Simchak

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AT THE MARKET

What we're cooking now

Fine Cooking editors (and a reader) share some delicious ideas for in-season ingredients.



Heirloom Tomato Toasts with Basil Pesto

In a food processor, pulse basil, pine nuts, Parmigiano-Reggiano, and a little fresh garlic together until finely chopped. With the motor running, add enough olive oil to make a thick pesto. Spread the pesto on toasted olive bread, layer on sliced heirloom tomatoes, and sprinkle with sea salt.

-Rebecca Freedman



Smoky Eggplant Baba Ghanoush

Prick an eggplant or two a couple of times and grill over medium heat (or broil), turning as needed, until collapsed and the skin is charred. In a food processor, purée the flesh with tahini, mashed garlic, lemon juice, olive oil, salt, and ground dried chile, like Aleppo (which is mildly hot and smoky). Serve with pita chips. —Jennifer Armentrout



Roasted Nectarines with Gorgonzola

Slice firm-ripe nectarines into sixths and toss with olive oil, honey, salt, and pepper. Roast until barely softened, sprinkle crumbled Gorgonzola on top, and then continue to roast until the cheese starts to melt. Serve warm over a lemony arugula salad, along with crusty bread.

-Evan Barbour

Grilled Plums with Vanilla Ice Cream

Lightly brush halved, pitted, firmripe plums with vegetable oil and grill cut side down over mediumhigh, indirect heat until just beginning to brown. Flip the plums and continue grilling until tender. Serve over vanilla ice cream with a sprinkle of sugar and a pinch of -Denise Mickelsen



Chop the chard leaves and cut up the stems. Season bite-size pieces of chicken with salt and pepper and sauté in olive oil until golden. Remove the chicken and stir in minced garlic, chopped onion, and the chard stems; cook until tender. Deglaze the pan with white wine, add the chard leaves. cover, and steam until wilted. In a bowl, combine the chard, chicken, and grated Parmesan with cooked orzo. -Melissa Denchak



Slice yellow squash diagonally into 1/2-inch-thick planks. Brush with olive oil and sprinkle with salt. Grill on both sides over high heat until well browned and just tender. Whisk together extra-virgin olive oil, lime juice, chipotle chile powder, and salt and drizzle over the squash. -Lisa Waddle







ONE READER'S SEASONAL SPECIALTY



Grilled Watermelon and Mozzarella Bites with Raspberry Vinaigrette

Slice watermelon into 1-inch-thick wedges. Brush with olive oil, season with salt and pepper, and grill both sides over medium-high heat until grill marks form. Slice the flesh into 1-inch squares and slide each square onto a toothpick with a small ball of fresh mozzarella, an arugula leaf, and a basil leaf. Drizzle with raspberry vinaigrette and serve.

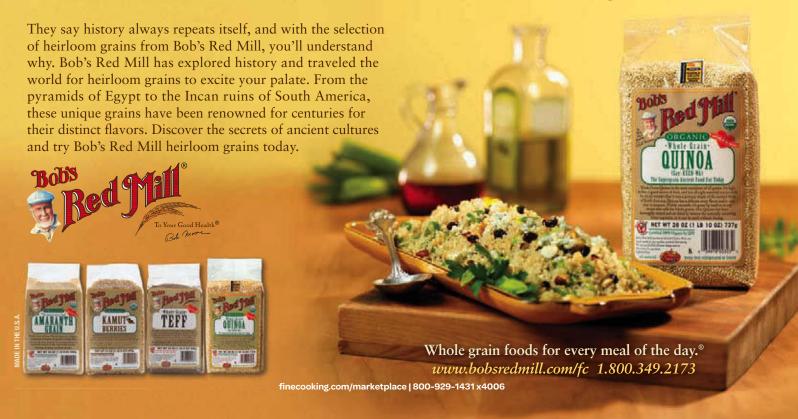
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PRESERVING THE SEASON

Hot Chiles

Turn ripe summer chiles into a hot sauce to spice up barbecue, tacos, and more. BY DAVE DE WITT

I'VE BEEN GROWING AND WRITING ABOUT CHILES for more than a quarter-century now, and one of my favorite ways to preserve them when they're at their late-summer peak is to make Louisiana-style hot sauce.

Typically made with cayenne or tabasco chiles, this vinegar-based sauce is a hallmark of Louisiana cuisine and is ubiquitous on restaurant tables throughout the state. My homemade version is spicy, of course, but it also has a brighter, cleaner flavor than that of any store-bought brand, and it couldn't be easier to make. You char and peel fresh chiles, purée them with aromatics like basil and garlic, and then combine the purée with vinegar, which boosts the flavor and preserves the sauce. Once strained, it's ready to spice up hamburgers, barbecue sauce, Bloody Marys, classic Cajun dishes like gumbo, jambalaya, and dirty rice, and anything else that could use a fiery kick.

louisiana-style hot sauce

Although tabasco chiles are traditional in this style of hot sauce, they can be hard to find. Cayennes are just as classic and flavorful. Other small, hot, red chiles (like serranos) may be used, too. Yields 1½ cups

- 11/4 lb. fresh red chiles, such as cayenne, tabasco, or serrano
- medium cloves garlic, sliced in half and peeled
- 1 tsp. finely chopped fresh
- tsp. finely chopped fresh oregano
- 1/4 tsp. ground celery seed

Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper

1 cup distilled white vinegar

Position a rack about 6 inches from the broiler and heat the broiler on high. Put the chiles on a broiler pan and broil, flipping as

it's fine if some bits of the skin remain-but don't seed them. Put the chiles, garlic, basil, oregano, celery seed, a big pinch of salt, and 1/2 tsp. pepper in a food processor. With the machine running, slowly add the vinegar needed, until the skins blister through the feed tube and process until smooth. Strain the sauce through a fine

bottles. The sauce will keep in the refrigerator for at least 1 month.

Dave DeWitt lives in Albuquerque, New Mexico, and is the author of more than 40 cookbooks, most of which are dedicated to chiles. He is also the founder of fiery-foods.com.



SAFETY FIRST

Capsaicin is the compound that makes hot chiles hot. It can irritate your skin, so be sure to wear gloves when handling chiles. Ventilate the kitchen, as well, to keep the chile fumes from building up and becoming too intense.

and blacken on all sides,

2 to 3 minutes per side.

Transfer the chiles to a large

bowl, cover with plastic wrap, and let cool for 10 minutes.

Stem and peel the chiles-

sieve and season to taste

with more salt. Transfer to





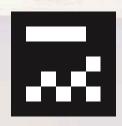








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vietnamese-style rice noodle salad

Packed with bright lime flavor, a touch of spicy heat, and just the right amount of crunch, this noodle salad is great for lunch or dinner. Serves 6 to 8

- ½ cup fresh lime juice (from about 2 large limes)
- 1/4 cup finely chopped fresh cilantro
- 2 Tbs. fish sauce
- 2 Tbs. granulated sugar
- 1 Tbs. minced ginger
- 3 large cloves garlic, minced
- 1 Thai bird chile, seeded and minced
- 8 oz. dried rice noodles (about ¼ inch thick)
- 8 cups thinly sliced iceberg lettuce (from 1 large head)
- 1 large carrot, shaved into ribbons (use a vegetable peeler)
- 1 large cucumber, peeled if you like, cut into ½-inch dice

- 5 medium radishes, thinly sliced
- 1 cup fresh mint leaves
- ½ cup salted peanuts, coarsely chopped

In a small bowl, combine the lime juice, cilantro, fish sauce, sugar, ginger, garlic, and chile and let sit for at least 10 minutes.

Meanwhile, bring a large pot of well-salted water to a boil. Add the rice noodles and stir immediately. Cook the noodles, stirring frequently, until just tender, about 4 minutes. Drain and rinse the noodles with cold water until cool to the touch.

In a large salad bowl, combine the noodles with the lettuce, carrot, cucumber, radishes, and mint leaves. Toss the salad with the dressing and garnish with the peanuts.



Mojo is a garlicky citrus sauce that's popular throughout Latin America and the Caribbean. This lime-heavy version (most mojo is made with sour oranges, a tropical fruit) is a perfect marinade for cube steak, a quick-cooking cut of beef round. Serve with rice and beans or rice pilaf. Serves 4

- 8 medium cloves garlic, peeled Kosher salt
- 11/2 tsp. finely chopped fresh oregano
- 1 tsp. ground cumin Freshly ground black pepper
- 34 cup fresh lime juice (from about 4 medium limes)
- ½ cup fresh orange juice (from about 1 large orange)
- 1 tsp. granulated sugar
- 4 beef cube steaks (11/4 to 11/2 lb. total)
- 1 Tbs. canola oil
- 1/2 large white onion, thinly sliced
- 1/2 large red bell pepper, cored and thinly sliced

In a mortar, lightly crush the garlic with a pestle. Sprinkle with 2 tsp. salt and let sit for 5 minutes. Add the oregano, cumin, and ½ tsp. black pepper and mash until a paste forms. Transfer to a medium bowl and add the lime juice, orange juice, and sugar; whisk until well combined.

Lay the steaks in a 9x13-inch glass or ceramic dish and pour the garlic mixture (the mojo) over them. Let the steaks marinate for no more than 10 minutes

Meanwhile, heat the oil in a 12-inch skillet over high heat. Add the onions and peppers and cook, stirring constantly until they begin to soften, about 2 minutes. Transfer to a bowl.

Add the steaks to the pan along with 2 Tbs. of the mojo (discard the rest). Cook for 2 minutes, flip, add the onions and peppers, cover, and cook for 1 minute more. Uncover and continue cooking until the meat is just cooked through, about 2 minutes more.

Serve the steaks topped with the onions, peppers, and a drizzle of the cooked mojo.





MAKE IT TONIGHT

Just 30 minutes to dinner, start to finish



sourdough panzanella with grilled chicken

In this classic Italian salad, sourdough bread soaks up the flavors of fresh herbs, late-summer tomatoes, and a savory vinaigrette. Adding grilled chicken turns it into a full meal. Serves 4

- 1/2 cup olive oil; more for the grill
- 4 3/4-inch-thick slices sourdough bread
- 1 tsp. finely chopped fresh oregano
- ½ tsp. smoked sweet paprika Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 1 lb. boneless, skinless chicken breast halves, trimmed
- 3 Tbs. red wine vinegar
- 1 anchovy fillet, rinsed
- 1 small clove garlic
- 4 medium tomatoes, cut into 3/4-inch pieces (3 cups)

- 1 medium cucumber, peeled, halved lengthwise, seeded, and cut into 34-inch pieces (11/2 cups)
- 1/2 small red onion, chopped (1/2 cup)
- 14 cup chopped fresh mixed herbs, such as basil, parsley, cilantro, or mint

Prepare a medium-high charcoal or gas grill fire. Clean and oil the grill grate.

Brush the bread on both sides with 2 Tbs. of the olive oil. Grill the bread until well marked, about 1 minute per side. Transfer to a cutting bread about the same size.

board, cut into 3/4-inch cubes, and set aside. In a small bowl, mix the oregano, smoked paprika, ½ tsp. salt, and ½ tsp. pepper. Sprinkle evenly over the chicken breasts. Grill, turning once, until an instant-read thermometer inserted into the thickest part of each breast registers 165°F, 10 to 12 minutes total. Transfer to a cutting board, let rest for 5 minutes, and then cut into 3/4-inch cubes. In a large bowl, whisk the remaining 6 Tbs. olive oil and the vinegar. Press the anchovy fillet and garlic clove through a garlic press into the bowl (or mince by hand). Add the bread, chicken, tomatoes, cucumber, red onion, and herbs, and toss well. Season to taste with salt and pepper and serve.

-Bruce Weinstein and Mark Scarbrough

smoky grilled meatball subs

The pork meatballs in these saucy sandwiches get a double dose of smoky flavor: first from smoked paprika and then from the grill. Sweet, fire-roasted chiles and grilled tomatoes form the base for a delicious sauce. **Serves 4**

- 5 6-inch soft sub rolls
- 1 lb. ground pork
- 1 large egg, lightly beaten
- 2 large cloves garlic, minced
- 2 tsp. finely grated lemon zest
- 2 tsp. chopped fresh thyme
- 1 tsp. smoked sweet paprika Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 2 Tbs. extra-virgin olive oil; more for the grill
- 1 medium tomato (8 oz.), halved crosswise
- 2 jarred piquillo peppers
- ½ tsp. crushed red pepper flakes
- 1 oz. finely grated manchego cheese (about 1 cup)

Prepare a medium-high gas or charcoal grill fire.

Tear half of one roll into ¼-inch pieces and put in a small bowl. Add ¼ cup water and let sit until the bread has absorbed the water, about 5 minutes. Gently squeeze the bread to remove excess water and finely chop the soaked bread (you should have about ¼ cup).

In a large bowl, break up the pork with your hands. Add the soaked bread, egg, garlic, lemon zest, thyme, smoked paprika, 1½ tsp. salt, and ½ tsp. pepper. Use your hands to gently combine the mixture. Shape into 16 meatballs (each about 1½ inches).

Split the remaining rolls, but don't cut them completely in half. Brush the insides of the rolls with 1 Tbs. of the olive oil. Brush the cut side of the tomato and the meatballs with the remaining olive oil.

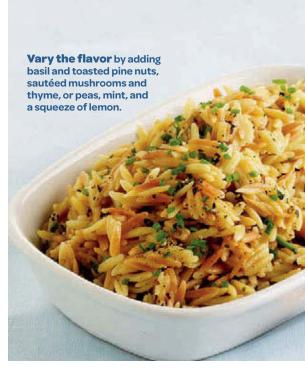
Oil the grill grate and grill the tomato until softened and lightly browned, turning once, 4 to 6 minutes. Grill the bread split side down until golden and lightly charred on the edges, 1 to 3 minutes. Grill the meatballs until they're just cooked through, turning once, about 8 minutes. Remove each item as it finishes cooking and set aside.

In a food processor, purée the grilled tomato, piquillo peppers, and red pepper flakes. Season to taste with salt.

Put 4 meatballs in each roll and top with one-quarter of the sauce and one-quarter of the cheese. Serve hot.

—Samantha Seneviratne





orzo with brown butter and parmesan

This little black dress of a side dish pairs with practically anything—grilled meat, roasted chicken, sautéed vegetables. Like rice pilaf, the orzo is browned in butter before broth is added, which gives it a rich, nutty flavor. Serves 4

- 11/2 cups lower-salt chicken broth
 - 2 Tbs. unsalted butter
 - 1 cup orzo
- 1/3 cup dry white wine
 Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 2 Tbs. freshly grated Parmigiano-Reggiano Thinly sliced fresh chives (optional)

In a 1- to 2-quart saucepan, bring the chicken broth and ½ cup water to a simmer over medium-high heat.

In a 3-quart heavy-duty saucepan, cook the butter over medium heat, swirling the pan occasionally, until the butter turns goldenbrown and smells nutty, about 2 minutes. Add the orzo and stir with a wooden spoon to coat well. Cook until the orzo just begins to turn a light golden color, about 2 minutes.

Pour in the wine and stir until absorbed, about 1 minute. Add the simmering broth mixture, stir, cover, and reduce the heat to low. Cook until the orzo is just tender, about 12 minutes; the mixture may still be wet but will set up. Stir the orzo, season to taste with salt and a generous amount of pepper, and mix in the Parmigiano. Cover and let rest 5 minutes. Add the chives (if using) and serve. —Laraine Perri

garlic-rubbed grilled cheese with prosciutto and tomatoes

Three kinds of cheese, salty prosciutto, fresh tomatoes, and a touch of spice make this anything but your everyday grilled cheese sandwich. Serve with a lightly dressed green salad. Serves 4

- 3 oz. grated aged Gruyère (114 cups)
- 3 oz. grated fontina (about 1 cup)
- 2 Tbs. finely grated Parmigiano-Reggiano
- 1/4 tsp. crushed red pepper flakes (or to taste)
- 1/2-inch-thick slices rustic Italian
- 4 very thin slices prosciutto, halved crosswise
- 2 medium ripe tomatoes, cut into 1/4-inch-thick slices
- 2 Tbs. salted butter, at room temperature
- 1 to 2 large cloves garlic, halved and peeled for rubbing

Lightly toss the cheeses and red pepper flakes in a small bowl. Put 4 slices of the bread on a work surface and evenly distribute half of the cheese mixture on top. Put 2 pieces of prosciutto (1 full slice) on each sandwich and top with 2 to 3 slices of tomato-enough to cover the cheese

and prosciutto in a single layer. Season the tomatoes with salt and sprinkle the remaining cheese on top. Lightly butter one side of the remaining bread slices and place them butter side up on the sandwiches.

Heat a griddle or a large skillet over medium-low heat. Arrange the sandwiches butter side down on the griddle and cook until the bread is toasted and golden-brown, about 2 minutes. Meanwhile, spread an even layer of butter on the top slice of bread.

Using a spatula, flip the sandwiches and cook until golden-brown on the other side, gently pressing the sandwiches with the back of the spatula to compress, about 2 minutes. Remove the sandwiches from the griddle and lightly rub both sides of each with the cut side of the garlic. Using a serrated knife, slice the sandwiches in half and serve immediately.

-Tasha DeSerio





blackberry fool

A fool is a simple dessert made with puréed fruit and sweetened whipped cream. Here, a chipotle chile adds a subtle spicy note that enhances the sweetness of the berries. Serves 4

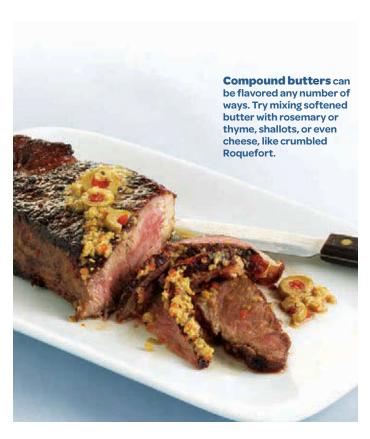
- 11/2 cups fresh blackberries
- 1 chipotle chile (from a can of chipotles in adobo sauce), stemmed
- 3 Tbs. light brown sugar
- 1 tsp. fresh lime juice
- cup heavy cream
- 1½ Tbs. confectioners' sugar
- ½ tsp. pure vanilla extract

Set a medium-mesh sieve over a medium bowl. Use the back of a wooden spoon to push 1 cup of the blackberries and the chipotle through the sieve, smearing the berries and chile back and forth across the mesh until only seeds and pulp remain. Scrape any purée from the bottom of the sieve. Stir the brown sugar and lime juice into the purée. In a chilled medium metal bowl, combine the cream, confectioners' sugar, and vanilla and beat with an electric hand mixer on high speed until soft peaks form, about 2 minutes. Pour the blackberry mixture over the cream. Use a butter knife to gently stir the mixture so that thin streaks of dark purple run through

Spoon the mixture into 4 glasses or small dessert bowls and top with the remaining blackberries.

—Bruce Weinstein and Mark Scarbrough





new york steaks with martini butter

Top a simple steak, pork chop, or chicken breast with a compound (flavored) butter, and an average dish turns into an exceptional one. Serve these steaks with french fries and steamed broccoli or a Caesar salad. Serves 4

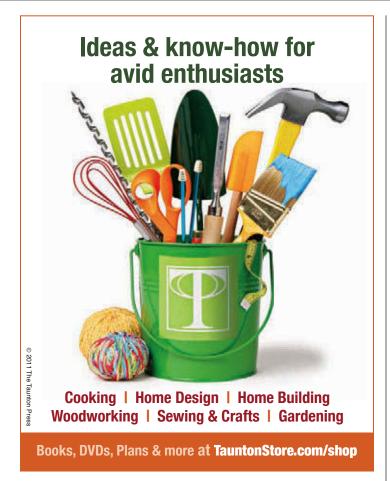
- 4 9- to 10-oz. boneless beef strip steaks, about 1 inch thick, trimmed of excess fat Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 3 Tbs. extra-virgin olive oil
- ½ cup drained pimiento-stuffed Spanish olives (martini olives), plus 4 olives, sliced, for garnish
- 2 Tbs. gin or vodka
- 1 Tbs. dry vermouth
- 2 tsp. Dijon mustard
- 2 oz. (4 Tbs.) unsalted butter, softened

Generously season both sides of the steaks with salt and pepper. Heat the oil in a 14-inch skillet over medium-high heat until shimmering hot (if you don't have a 14-inch skillet, divide the oil between two 10-inch skillets). Add the steaks and cook to your desired doneness, about 4 minutes per side for medium rare (130°F to 135°F).

Meanwhile, in a food processor, combine the ¼ cup olives, gin or vodka, vermouth, mustard, ½ tsp. salt, and ¼ tsp. pepper and pulse to coarsely chop. Add the butter and pulse to combine, scraping down the bowl as necessary.

Transfer the steaks to a platter or plates and divide the martini butter evenly among the steaks, letting it melt a bit.

Garnish with the sliced olives and serve. —*Jill Silverman Hough*





Great Finds

Our latest buys for the kitchen and grill. BY MELISSA DENCHAK

BBQ Tools That Last These handsome grill tools by Zwilling J.A. Henckels (the knife pros) are for the serious griller. Each one is styled from a single piece of 18/10 rust- and corrosion-resistant stainless steel and has a handle made from pakka wood (a hardwood-resin blend). They're solid, feel great in the hand, and are dishwasher-safe. Tongs, \$59.99; turner and fork, \$49.99 each; brookstone.com; 800-846-3000.

New World Olive Oil

DOSCIENTAS

A Chilean import, this single-varietal Arbequina extra-virgin olive oil from Las Doscientas is made from hand-picked olives that are cold-pressed immediately after harvest for maximum flavor. We love its fresh, grassy taste, berry notes, and peppery finish. Use it in salads or for drizzling over chicken or salmon. \$17.99 for a 500-ml bottle; fosterfinefoods.com; 404-405-6089.

Just Nuts

This chunky Marcona almond butter will make you rethink PB&J. Made from roasted Spanish Marconas and sea salt, it has a deliciously rich, toasted flavor and a mildly sweet finish. Smear it onto sandwiches, stir it into yogurt, drizzle it over ice cream, or pair it with chocolate or cheese. \$9.99 for a 9.17-oz. tub; murrayscheese.com; 888-692-4339.

Almond

Clever Corn Holders

You love steaming hot corn on the cob-just not when it falls off the corn holders and into your lap. Oxo's new corn holders fix that problem: Each one has a spiral pin that twists into the ear of corn, securing the holder. Nonslip grips ensure that buttery fingers don't slide off, either. \$10.99 for eight corn holders with a storage case; oxo.com; 800-545-4411.



Remote Grilling

Forget hovering over the grill-the new iGrill probe thermometer will keep an eye on those steaks for you. By wirelessly communicating with your iPhone, iPad, or iPod touch, the iGrill allows you to track temperature and time while you entertain guests or mix cocktails in the kitchen. It alerts you when your burgers reach medium rare or when there's only a minute left to give your chicken thighs that final coating of glaze. \$99.99; igrillinc.com; 888-934-4745.

Lightning-Fast Grill Lighter

Aim the Looftlighter at the charcoal in your grill, and this plug-in fire starter will blow superheated air that's hot enough to light briquettes in seconds, no lighter fluid required. Hold it there longer, and the coals will be grilling-ready in just five minutes. \$79.95; firecraft.com; 800-745-6109.





The Reading List

New must-have reads for food lovers. BY KIMBERLY Y. MASIBAY

Maine Classics

More Than 150 Recipes From Down East By Mark Gaier and Clark Frasier Running Press, \$30

Turns out, there's a lot more to Maine than lobsters and blueberry pie. Inspired as much by the farm and forest as it is by the sea and shore, the New American cuisine that's served up in this terrific cookbook by Mark Gaier and Clark Frasier, the James Beard Awardwinning chef-owners of Arrows Restaurant in southern Maine, offers something for everyone. There are unpretentious side dishes like Broccoli Casserole, weeknight recipes for Double Lamb Chops with Mint Relish, plenty of options for the grill, and even a Thanksgivingworthy turkey. Of course, there's a big haul of seafood recipes, too: Classic Lobster Rolls, Grilled Salmon with Green Beans and Corn, and Pan-Fried Trout are just the start.

The majority of the book's 150 recipes are approachable and uncomplicated. Ingredient lists are free of hard-to-find items (avocados and curry powder are about as exotic as it gets), and even the inexperienced cook will feel comfortable preparing the creamy Clam Chowder with Thyme, crowd-pleasing Twice-Baked Potatoes, and Boiled Crab with Drawn Butter.

Indulgent photos and chatty essays are sprinkled through the book's nine chapters, each of which introduces readers to the lobstermen, farmers, fishermen, and artisan cheesemakers who inspire the authors. The stories and images may seem like classic Maine, but the simple, delicious food you'll find throughout is quintessentially American.

The Food of Spain

By Claudia Roden HarperCollins Publishers, \$40

Claudia Roden has devoted much of her life to writing about traditional cuisines from around the world before they disappear. In this, her twelfth cookbook, the James Beard Awardwinning author turns her attention to Spain.

Region by region and era by era, she untangles the Moorish, Jewish, Roman, and Celtic influences that permeate Spain's national cuisine. It makes for great armchair travel and even better cooking. Roden juxtaposes scholarly research with musings on food and life and brings matchless insight and authority to the table. Whether she's writing about an iconic Spanish specialty like Paella Valenciana, Tortilla de Patatas (a traditional potato omelette), or a lesser-known treat of Roast Chicken with Apples and Grapes, it's as if she's right there with you, sharing secrets and divulging funny little stories. Her clearly written recipes range from simple (think Sweet Roasted Tomatoes, Shrimp with Garlic, and Fresh Fruits Stewed in Wine) to more complex (like Roast Guinea Fowl with Marzipan and Dried Fruit Stuffing and Crêpes Filled with Custard) and will gratify serious and novice cooks alike. Ingredient lists are precise (she's careful to specify details like what size egg or type of apple to use), with most items readily found in grocery stores.

When you consider the thousands of recipes Roden collected and tested, it's amazing that she offers just the two hundred or so here. Her aim was to feature the most delicious she could find, though, and it's clear she succeeded.

Tasting Notes

Below are a few of the dishes we tested, tasted, and loved. Be sure to give them a try.

Maine Classics

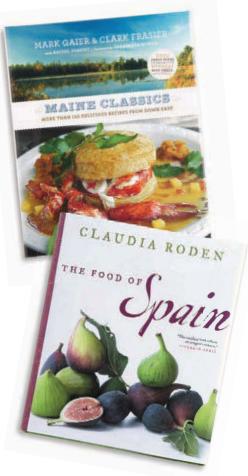
Shrimp Roll with Herbs and Celery (page 112) These are just as good as lobster rolls but so much easier to make. Fresh shrimp, tossed in a lemony herbed mayo, are stuffed into a grilled, buttered bun for sensational results.

Grilled Flank Steak with Mom's Sauce (page 174) Use this quick-to-make, rosemary-infused vinaigrette from Clark's mom on more than just steak. Its sweet-sour notes are delicious with sautéed lamb chops and on salad, too.

The Food of Spain

"Wrinkled" Potatoes and Green Sauce with Cilantro (page 279) Cut open these perfectly salty potatoes and spoon on plenty of Roden's refreshingly tangy green mojo sauce. It's an unbelievably tasty combination.

Garlic Chicken (page 351) This stovetop braise produces fantastic results. The chicken is moist and deeply flavorful; the rich sauce is garlicky, in a mellow, sweet, nutty way.



WHAT WE'RE READING NOW



A spinoff of his awardwinning blog, Hank Shaw's new book, Hunt, Gather, Cook: Finding the Forgotten Feast (\$25.99, Rodale), is an introductory course in how to fish, forage, and hunt for your own food—and then reap

the rewards in the kitchen. His humorous anecdotes, instructive voice, and recipes for Wild Greens Risotto and Buttermilk Fried Rabbit will inspire both foodies and outdoor enthusiasts to explore the wild, edible world around us.

-Melissa Denchak, assistant editor

Kimberly Y. Masibay is a Fine Cooking *contributing editor.*



For recipes from these and other cookbooks, visit FineCooking.com.



Take a Summer Vacation, by Bottle

Break out of your wine rut and explore the world with traditional summer wines from nontraditional places. BY ALDER YARROW

GOT VACATION PLANS THIS SUMMER? Even if you don't intend to leave your backyard, you (and your taste buds) can easily travel abroad through the wines you drink.

Summer wines should be thirst-quenching, light, and pair well with the fresh produce and grill-worthy fare that star in the cookouts of the season. Many varietals fall under this banner, but some of the most popular are Sauvignon Blanc, Chardonnay, rosé, sparkling wine, and everyone's new favorite red, Pinot Noir.

People tend to reflexively reach for their preferred brands of these wines, but that's a shame. Wine drinking gives you the chance to explore the world, armed with nothing more than a corkscrew and a glass. So, forget your go-to wines for now and discover some new summer wines from some unusual places.

The new Sauvignon Blanc comes from South Africa

Beloved for its crispness and green fruit flavors, Sauvignon Blanc has come a long way from its roots in France's Loire Valley. This varietal's broad popularity in America began

with Robert Mondavi's oaky efforts in California (marketed as Fumé Blanc) in the early 1970s and continued when New Zealand's zingy Sauvignon Blancs hit the market in the late 1980s. Those wines are still delicious, but today, some of the most interesting new Sauvignon Blancs hail from South Africa.

Home to one of the most ecologically diverse and starkly beautiful wine-growing regions on the planet, South Africa is producing Sauvignon Blancs that express a rainbow of flavors, from flinty to fruit laden, depending on the microclimate of the grapes. Some of the best wines, made at the continent's southern tip where the sprays of the Indian and Atlantic Oceans crash together, seem to offer a taste of sea air along with their lime and green apple freshness. These wines are beautiful matched with any fish dish you can dream up.

Italy is a rosé paradise

Pink wines are experiencing a renaissance lately, as the stigma of soda-pop sweet white Zinfandel from the '70s and '80s fades from

memory. Today, most Americans drink domestic rosés from California as well as some fabulous dry rosés from southern France.

However, the most overlooked, underappreciated, and affordable source for worldclass dry rosé right now is Italy. Home to dozens of unique wine regions, each making different rosés from hundreds of different grapes, Italy is a virtual paradise for rosé lovers, especially those who dislike the oily sweetness that mars many late-picked and poorly made domestic efforts. Try the pale, barely-even-pink, floral rosés made from Cannaiolo grapes in Tuscany, or the copperpink, berry, and wet stone versions made from Negroamaro grapes around Salento, in the heel of the boot. Your summer salads, tomato dishes, and pocketbook will thank you.

Chardonnay reaches new heights in Chile

American wine drinkers are, for the most part, fully committed to their love affair with Chardonnay, and for good reason. When made well, Chardonnay can be among the world's greatest white wines. After a recent period of



This Summer, Try Wines from Unexpected Places

Don't settle for drinking the same old thing this summer. Instead, explore the world through these 10 bottles:

SOUTH AFRICA

2009 Mulderbosch Sauvignon Blanc, Western Cape (\$19) Kiwi, wet stone, and gooseberry flavors combine to make a delicate and silky wine with perfectly balanced acidity.

2010 Springfield "Life from Stone" Sauvignon Blanc, Robertson (\$18) Mouthwatering with juicy gooseberry and lime flavors, this wine shows off Sauvignon Blanc's racy side.



ITALY

2009 Attilio Contini Rosato della Valle del Tirso, Sardinia (\$11) Bright and pink, this wine delivers strawberry and watermelon flavors tinged with hibiscus. It's made from Sardinia's native Nieddera grapes.

2010 Montenidoli Rosato di Canaiuolo IGT, San Gimignano (\$20) Wonderfully delicate and pale in color, this utterly gulpable wine is a floral wonderland with a re-



CHILE

2007 Maycas del Limarí Reserva Especial Chardonnay.

Limarí Valley (\$20) This wine has stunning power mixed with great minerality and citrus flavor. Any Limarí Valley Chardonnay from this producer will be excellent.

2009 Conchay Toro Marques de Casa Concha Chardonnay, Limarí Valley (\$18) With tropical flavors and a

zingy backbone of acidity, this wine appeals to those who don't mind a bit of oak.



AUSTRALIA

2004 Yering Station Yarrabank Cuvée sparkling wine, Yarra Valley (\$14) Apple, pear, and wet stone flavors combine in one of the world's greatest values in high-quality sparkling wine.

Nonvintage Jansz sparkling rosé, Tasmania (\$16)

This delicate, dry, pink bubbly is easy to love (and to drink) thanks to its bright melon and berry flavors



NEW ZEALAND

2007 Craggy Range Zebra Vineyard Pinot Noir, Central Otago (\$30) Sour cherry, plum, and wet wood flavors mix in this juicy wine, and bright acidity keeps it lively through its long finish.

2008 Peregrine Pinot Noir, Central Otago (\$25)

A dark ruby gem, this wine smells of sweet plums and offers a mix of cranberry and raspberry flavors. with a hint of herbs and spice.



critical acclaim for California Chardonnays with heavy buttery and oaky flavors, wine makers are shifting back to a higher-acid, mineral- and citrus-driven flavor profile.

At the edges of the high-altitude deserts of northern Chile, winemakers are cultivating this style of Chardonnay with remarkable results. Chardonnays from the Elqui and Limarí Valleys possess a stunning fusion of bright, steely minerality and exotic tropical fruit flavors. While sometimes difficult to find, these wines are worth seeking out for the sheer adventure of tasting them, not to mention their ability to enhance creamy or buttery dishes, from pastas to vegetables to lean meats, like chicken.

Southern Australia: the next great sparkling wine region

Sparkling wine may not be everyone's first choice for summer drinking, but it should be. Served ice-cold, it's incredibly refreshing. And while good Champagne is a bit dear for everyday drinking, the rising availability and fantastic pricing of Prosecco and cava means that bubbly isn't just for parties anymore.

As sparkling wine producers in the Northern Hemisphere (think Champagne in France and Prosecco in Italy) nervously watch annual temperatures climb (cooler weather preserves their grapes' acidity), regions that were traditionally almost too cold to make sparkling wines (like England or even Denmark) are attracting vintners hot on the trail of the Next Great Sparkling Wine Region. While the verdict is still out on those attempts, parts of southern Australia are showing incredible promise.

Thanks to Australia's ever-popular Shiraz, few people think of that country as a source for Pinot Noir, the traditional grape in most great sparkling wine. But the bubbly showing up on our shelves from regions like the Yarra Valley, Tasmania, and the Adelaide Hills offers a remarkable quality-to-price ratio and that crucial mix of mineral-savory-fruit flavors that make sparkling wine so delicious. Enjoy them on their own or matched with an incredible array of foods, from vegetables to seafood, and in particular, anything deep-fried.

Pinot Noir, now from New Zealand

Ever since American wine lovers were freed from their Merlot-suffused reveries by the movie Sideways, Pinot Noir's popularity has exploded. Its acidity and bright berry flavors make it a great food wine, and a wonderful summer wine, too, when barely chilled.

Recently, New Zealand has joined the ranks of world-class Pinot Noir regions (others include Burgundy, California, and Oregon). Way down on its Southern Island, which stretches towards Antarctica amidst blinding light and blue skies, the Central Otago region is making Pinot Noirs of fantastic quality and distinction. The area's cool temperatures and heavy dose of ultraviolet light make for a long, slow growing season that helps the grapes develop dark flavors of black raspberry and cherry, married with earthy or mineral notes. These versatile wines can stand up to grilled meats of many kinds, but they also make for fine sipping on their own.

Alder Yarrow is the founder and writer of the award-winning wine blog, vinography.com.

HOW TO MAKE

French Fries

The only recipe you'll ever need for crisp, delicious results—every time. BY TONY ROSENFELD

AT MY RESTAURANTS IN BOSTON, we cut and cook about 2,000 pounds of potatoes for french fries every day, which has put me in the position of knowing a heck of a lot about fries. Fortunately, I love them, and I've learned that the best results come from getting the little things right: You have to

choose the proper potatoes, cut them uniformly, and then fry them twice. When tossed with just the right amount of salt and served piping hot, these crisp, golden fries rival those of any restaurant—even mine.



Need to Know

Russets are best for frying They have a high starch content and relatively mild flavor. Look for Burbank russets, which develop a crisper texture and cook more evenly than Norkotah russets. If the variety isn't indicated on the bag (or if you're buying from a bulk bin), try asking the produce manager which variety is typically stocked. Russets may also be labeled as Idaho or baking potatoes.

Soaking removes excess starch Letting the sliced potatoes soak in water and then rinsing them a few times removes excess surface starch, which would otherwise cause premature browning when the potatoes are fried.

A neutral-flavored oil produces fresh-tasting fries Peanut and canola oils work best. They also have a high smoke point, which means they can reach the high temperatures necessary for deep frying without burning.

The ultimate texture comes from double frying The first fry (at 330°F) softens and cooks the potatoes through; the second fry (at 360°F) browns them to crispy perfection. Frying the potatoes just once produces tough, grainy, cardboard-like results.

Tool Kit

Have these kitchen essentials on hand before you start the recipe:

- Vegetable peeler (optional)
- Cutting board
- Chef's knife
- Liquid measuring cup
- Large bowls
- Kitchen towels
- Baking sheets
- Large pot or Dutch oven
- Deep-fry
- thermometer
- Skimmer or large
- slotted spoon
- Paper towels



HAND-SLICE YOUR POTATOES There's no need for fancy tools or cutting methods when slicing potatoes for french fries. Simply cut each potato lengthwise into ½-inch-thick disks, then cut these disks lengthwise into ½-inch-thick sticks. Try to keep your cuts uniform so the potatoes cook evenly.

Photographs by Scott Phillips; food styling by Samantha Seneviratn





La Grande Séduction

The French restaurant seemed exotic. The chef was dashing. And the steak au poivre? Magnifique. BY GIULIA MELUCCI

ONE SUMMER DURING COLLEGE, I worked at a French restaurant housed high above New York's Wall Street, in what was once J. P. Morgan's apartment. Though nouvelle cuisine may have been all the rage at the time, you wouldn't have known it at La Tour d'Or. The menu in that old wood-paneled room did not deviate from classic-French-bordering-oncliché. Still, to 19-year-old Italian-American me, raised on my mother's ditalini and cacciatore, it all seemed trés exotique. We served lunches of soupe à l'oignon, vichyssoise, saumon en papillote, and profiteroles on stiff white tablecloths to a clientele of financiers who worked in the area. At the time, I had no idea what role cooking would play in my life, but I listened and learned words that seemed well worth knowing, like mise en place and garde manger, and I paid close attention to the steak au poivre for a few reasons.

It was the most popular item on the menu, so I saw it prepared several times a day from my post in the kitchen, where it was my job to take the plates from the cooks, garnish them with parsley or watercress, wipe up any errant sauce drips, and carry them out to the waiters' stations. I didn't interact with the customers, which was just fine with me-I had a front row seat to the spectacle of chefs at work. It didn't hurt that the head chef, John, was quite handsome. Sure, this was the '80s and his moustache spoke of the '70s, but to me, he was a Charles Bronson of the stove. It was exciting to see him doing anything, but he especially shined in the making of the sauce au poivre. When he poured Cognac into the heavy black skillet, he tipped it so that some of the liquor spilled onto the fire, causing flames to shoot out of the pan for an exhilarating moment. It was dangerous, it was sexy, it had to be delicious.

How would I ever get to taste it? Steak au poivre was certainly not on the roster of two dishes-omelets or hamburgers-served to us at family meal. Whatever nascent feminine wiles I might have employed on John were constantly kept in check by Maman, the owner's mother, who sat on a stool beside the stove and barked orders and criticisms all

day long in heavily French-accented English. My offense was that I was "not delicate enough for French restaurant." This was not something I particularly needed to hear at that tender age, as I was trying to figure out who I was as a woman in the world. (Not that I aspired to work in a French restaurant, but I did want to be someone who might be graceful enough for the task.) It was my garnishes that really got her chèvre. She would demonstrate, grabbing the tiny stems forcefully with her not-very-delicate hands, shoving them under the veal chop or halibut fillet, where they would miraculously fall into a delicate bouquet. Mine would always end up misplaced and soaked in béarnaise.

"That day, I finally got to taste the sauce au poivre. It was exactly how I imagined it: the bite of pepper and the seduction of cream united in a zesty marriage."

My other job was to bring drinks to the cooks at the end of service. Maman would not allow anything more than soft drinks, but John preferred beer. If Maman was around, and she usually was, that request would start a riot. She would yell something in French, which John could understand and I couldn't quite, but which clearly indicated that beer was strictly interdit. One afternoon, after a particularly grueling service marked by hysterics from Maman over the pinkness of the beef Wellington, I knew that John needed more than a Coke. I also knew that Maman wasn't budging from her stool. I had an idea. I went to the bar, grabbed a bottle of dark ale, poured it into a coffee mug for John, and breezed into the kitchen, ecstatic over my

defiance. "Here's your coffee," I said with as much of a wink as I could muster, which probably looked more like I had dislodged a contact lens. But John understood and winked back proficiently.

That day, at family meal, my hamburger arrived dressed in sauce au poivre. It was exactly how I had imagined it: the bite of pepper and the seduction of cream united in a zesty marriage.

After college, when I was living on my own and trying out being an adult, steak au poivre was one of the first things I ever made. I didn't bother with the watercress garnish. Maybe I'm not so delicate, but that's OK. I know how to cook, and that, in itself, is a grace.





At the restaurant, John would tip the pan and ignite the Cognac, and you can do this, too; you can also ignite the sauce with a match for an invigorating spectacle. But I've come to believe that all these acts of derring-do are unnecessary and dangerous. I just bring the sauce to a boil for a minute to burn off the alcohol, whisk, whisk, whisk, and then add the cream, whisking all the while. Serve with roasted potatoes. Serves 2

- 2 boneless beef strip steaks (about 1 lb. total)
 - Kosher salt
- 1½ Tbs. black peppercorns, very coarsely crushed
 - 1 Tbs. olive oil
- 1 oz. (2 Tbs.) unsalted butter
- 1 small shallot, minced
- 1/4 cup Cognac
- ⅓ cup heavy cream
- 1 Tbs. chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley

Pat the steaks dry with a paper towel and season both sides lightly with salt. Coat both sides with the peppercorns, pressing so they adhere. Heat the oil in a 12-inch heavy-duty skillet over medium-high heat until shimmering hot. Add the steaks and cook to your desired doneness (2 to 3 minutes per side for medium rare). Transfer the steaks to a cutting board and tent them with foil. Pour off and discard any fat left in the pan, but not the brown bits.

Reduce the heat to medium and add the butter to the skillet. When melted, add

the shallot and cook until softened, about 1 minute. Remove the skillet from the heat and carefully add the Cognac. Return the skillet to medium heat and cook, whisking, until the Cognac reduces to a glaze, 1 to 2 minutes. Whisk in the cream and simmer until slightly thickened, 1 to 2 minutes. Stir in the parsley and season to taste with salt. **Transfer the steaks** to dinner plates and top with the sauce.

Giulia Melucci is the author of I Loved, I Lost, I Made Spaghetti. She lives in Brooklyn, New York.



Cooking Fresh Corn

Golden and sweet, this beloved vegetable is a must on any summer table. Here are the hows and whys of choosing, storing, and cooking it. BY DAVID JOACHIM AND ANDREW SCHLOSS

IT'S CORN SEASON AGAIN, and for a short time, those gorgeous ears will be everywhere you look, from supermarkets to farmers' markets. Knowing that the season won't last long, smart cooks are taking advantage of the harvest, using corn in everything from soups and salads to side dishes and desserts (corn milk ice cream, anyone?).

Here's the lowdown on how to make the most of this once-a-year gem. The secret? Knowing the science behind what's happening in those kernels.

What should I look for when buying corn on the cob?

First, never buy already-husked corn; the husk helps protect the kernels and keep them moist. The husk should be bright green, moist, and fit snugly around the ear. The silks should appear moist (but not soggy) and pale in color. Pick the corn up—it should feel plump and somewhat heavy. Peel back the husk just a bit and look for tightly packed kernels with a few undeveloped kernels at the top of the cob. This is a sign of slightly immature corn, which is desirable, since young corn tastes the sweetest.

Are there different varieties of corn?

Yes. There are two main varieties: sweet corn and high-sugar hybrids. Sweet corn contains about 16 percent sugar and 23 percent polysaccharides (long-chain carbohydrates that give sweet corn a creamy texture). High-sugar





"In only three days, harvested corn can lose nearly half its sweetness and go from sublime to subpar."

hybrids contain more sugar—about 40 percent—and only 5 percent creamy polysaccharides. These supersweet hybrids were developed in the 1960s to help fresh corn stay sweet over long storage periods, and now account for most of the fresh corn sold in supermarkets. But corn connoisseurs tend to prefer the more complex taste and silky texture of traditional sweet corn. To check which variety you have in your hand, pierce a kernel with your fingertip; a milky liquid indicates traditional sweet corn, while a thin, watery liquid indicates a high-sugar hybrid.

How should I store freshly picked corn?

Sweet corn tastes best picked from the stalk and rushed to the pot. The minute it's harvested, enzymes inside the kernels cause the corn's sweet sugars to convert into less-sweet compounds. In only three days, corn can lose nearly half its sweetness and go from sublime to subpar. To minimize that sugar loss, you need to slow down enzyme activity. That means keeping corn at cold temperatures from the get-go. Choose ears that are freshly picked, preferably in the cool morning hours, and kept cold at the market. As soon as you can, get the corn into the coldest part of your refrigerator. Like other produce, corn contains mostly water and eventually dries when left in the open air. To keep it juicy, leave the husks on and wrap the corn tightly in plastic. If the husks look dry, wrap a wet paper towel around the base of the ears; better yet, stand the ears upright in an inch or two of water in the refrigerator and cover with plastic bags.

What's the best way to cook corn?

Briefly. Our favorite methods are grilled in the husk (which takes about 15 minutes over a hot grill fire; see sidebar above right) or husked and boiled in water just long enough to soften the outer skin of each kernel (1 to 3 minutes). Longer cooking makes for bland, starchy-tasting corn, because heat hastens the conversion of corn sugar to tasteless complex carbohydrates. If your corn shows signs

Grill corn whole, husk and all

The easiest and, arguably, the best way to cook corn is to throw whole ears, husk on, over a fire. The husks char and impart a subtle smokiness to the corn. (If you prefer a less smoky aroma, soak the whole ears in water for 30 minutes to keep the husks from charring.)

The method is simple. Prepare a medium-high gas or charcoal grill fire. Grill the ears of corn in their husks, turning after 3 to 5 minutes, until the husks are blackened all over, 6 to 10 minutes total. Using grill mitts, peel back the entire husk and expose the kernels. Continue grilling until the kernels are lightly browned, about 5 minutes more. Remove the corn from the grill and let cool slightly. Remove and discard the husks, slather the corn with butter, sprinkle with salt, and serve.

of age or long storage (dry husks, mushy brown silks, shrunken kernels), you can boost its sweetness by adding about ½ cup sugar or ½ cup honey per gallon of boiling water. (Alternatively, add a little sugar or honey to the butter or other seasonings at the table). But avoid salting corn until after cooking—some evidence shows that salt toughens the outer skin of the kernels and keeps them from softening during cooking.

David Joachim and Andrew Schloss are the authors of the award-winning reference book The Science of Good Food. Their latest book is Fire It Up: 400 Recipes for Grilling Everything.



See a slide show of our top recipes for fresh corn at FineCooking.com/extras.



Eating Gluten-Free

These days, gluten-free products, menus, and diet books are everywhere. Ellie Krieger explains what's behind the trend.

THE GLUTEN-FREE DIET, once rarely heard of, is now officially mainstream. There are popular diet books about it, whole grocery store aisles dedicated to it, even special gluten-free menus at hotel chains. I'm surrounded by people who avoid gluten: my step-brother and his two kids, a good friend, my daughter's playmate, and one of my culinary assistants. This would have made the record books years ago, when gluten intolerance was thought to affect only one person in 10,000. Turns out, back then the vast majority of cases were undiagnosed. We were looking at only the tip of the gluten-free iceberg.

What is gluten intolerance?

Gluten is a protein found in wheat, rve, and barley, and in foods made from those grains. It's not inherently bad for you unless you have an intolerance for it (which, it turns out, a whopping one person in 10 does). There are two distinct types of gluten intolerance: celiac disease and gluten sensitivity. Celiac disease is an inherited autoimmune condition in which eating gluten leads to severe intestinal damage and nutrient malabsorption. It causes a range of symptoms from nausea, abdominal pain, and diarrhea to extreme fatigue, joint pain, skin conditions, and delayed growth in children. The only treatment for celiac disease is to follow a strict gluten-free diet for life.

Gluten sensitivity, which has only recently been recognized as a separate condition, has some of the same symptoms, though it doesn't lead to an autoimmune reaction or intestinal damage. People with gluten sensitivity have different thresholds for how much gluten they can tolerate. If you suspect that you're gluten intolerant, it's critical to see a doctor for a test before changing your diet. (A word of caution: If you're gluten intolerant and you avoid gluten prior to the test, it could lead to a faulty result.)

The fad factor

The rising popularity of gluten-free eating can also be attributed to pure trendiness, something I call fad-induced gluten avoidance. This "condition" plagues folks who are easily lured in by celebrity-endorsed diets and online



"Since one person in 10 is truly gluten intolerant, chances are that at some point you'll have to cook for a friend or family member on a gluten-free diet."

ads that make big promises with little to back them up. With their claims that going glutenfree can help you lose weight, be healthier, and regain your energy-and the Hollywood elite swearing by it—it's hard not to be seduced. Food marketers who make big bucks on gluten-free specialty items have helped propagate this trend, too. Sadly, one of its side effects is the minimizing and misdiagnosis of real gluten intolerance, which can happen when people who actually have it aren't taken seriously.

It's true that if you've regularly been eating loaves of bread and dozens of cookies and you turn toward naturally gluten-free vegetables, lean meats, nuts, beans, and fruit, you'll probably lose weight and feel better. But that has nothing to do with gluten and everything to do with eating a more balanced diet. Ironically, simply swapping wheat bread and the like with gluten-free counterparts can lead to weight gain and inferior nutrition, because gluten-free products are often higher in refined starches and sugars.

How to cook without gluten

Since so many people are truly gluten intolerant, chances are that at some point you'll have to cook for a friend or family member on a gluten-free diet. Luckily, it's not hard to do. All fresh vegetables, fruit, proteins (eggs, meat, poultry, fish, nuts, beans), and unprocessed dairy are naturally gluten-free, so base your meal around those main ingredients. Avoiding breads, cookies, and cakes made with wheat, rve, or barley is a no-brainer, but remember that pasta, couscous, bulgur, and farro are all made from wheat, and therefore contain gluten.

It's not always obvious when an ingredient contains gluten. Flavorings like sov sauce are often made with wheat protein, malt vinegars and beer are made with barley, and some sauces use flour as a thickener. Even the word "natural flavorings" on a package label can mean the food has gluten in it. To be safe, stick with simple, unprocessed seasonings like citrus juice, pure chile powders, ground spices, garlic, fresh herbs, salt, and pepper. And try using cornstarch, arrowroot, or tapioca as a thickener instead of wheat flour.

As for baking, gluten is what gives structure to bread and many other baked goods. Without it, they can turn out heavy and flat, so good gluten-free baking requires special ingredients to provide lightness and shape. Pancakes, on the other hand, feed that "bakery-fresh" craving but don't require much structure, so they're relatively easy to make gluten-free. In the recipe at right, I tinkered with various gluten-free flour combinations until I found one that's just right. Rather than use a lot of cornstarch and refined rice flour, as many recipes do, I opted for more nutritious, fiber-rich wholegrain brown rice flour and almond meal. The results are incredibly tender, moist, fluffy, and flavorful. You might make these pancakes for a guest who eats gluten-free, but once you taste them, you'll surely make them again just because they're delicious.

Registered dietitian Ellie Krieger is a Fine Cooking contributing editor.

gluten-free buttermilk pancakes

Yields 12 pancakes; serves 4

- 4¾ oz. (1 cup) brown rice flour
- 1½ oz. (½ cup) almond meal
- 1 Tbs. cornstarch
- 2 tsp. baking powder
- ½ tsp. table salt
- 1 cup low-fat buttermilk
- 2 large eggs
- 1 Tbs. canola oil
- 1 Tbs. honey
- 1 tsp. pure vanilla extract Cooking spray Pure maple syrup, for serving

Heat the oven to 200°F.

In a large bowl, whisk the brown rice flour, almond meal, cornstarch, baking powder, and salt. In a medium bowl, whisk the buttermilk, eggs, canola oil, honey, and vanilla. Stir the wet ingredients into the dry ingredi-

Coat a large nonstick griddle or

skillet with cooking spray and heat over medium-low heat until hot. Working in batches, ladle a scant 1/4 cup of the batter per pancake onto the griddle or skillet, leaving a few inches of space between each to allow for spreading. Cook until goldenbrown on the bottom and beginning to dry around the edges, 1 to 2 minutes. Flip and cook the pancakes until the other side is golden-brown, 1 to 2 minutes more. Transfer to a large baking sheet and keep warm in the oven. Spray the griddle with a fresh coating of oil between each batch.

Serve the pancakes with the maple syrup.

GOOD TO KNOW Gluten-Free Substitutions

FOR GRAIN DISHES
Instead of pasta, barley, bulgur, or wheat berries Use corn, rice, potato, quinoa, wild rice, or buckwheat

FOR THICKENING

Instead of 3 Tbs. wheat flour Use 2 Tbs. cornstarch, arrowroot, potato starch, or tapioca starch

FOR QUICK BREADS AND MUFFINS

Instead of 1 cup wheat flour

Use ¾ cup any combination of brown rice flour, cornmeal, and almond meal mixed with 1/4 cup cornstarch or tapioca starch

FOR CRUNCHY TOPPINGS AND COATINGS

Instead of breadcrumbs

Use crushed cornflakes or rice-square cereal; read the label to be sure it's gluten-free



Grilling Greats

from a

Grilling Great

Meat guru and award-winning cookbook author **Bruce Aidells** shares his grilling secrets and best recipes for the top five grill classics: chicken, pork chops, steak, ribs, and of course, burgers.

Set Up an Indirect Grill Fire

FIRST THINGS FIRST

If I've learned anything in all my years of grilling, it's that successful grilling starts with an indirect grill fire. Preparing the fire so there are hot zones (direct heat) and a cool zone (indirect heat) gives you a fail-safe setup: You can get grill marks and a nice sear by cooking over direct heat (where the fire is right below the food) and then move the food to indirect heat (where the fire is off to the side), so it can cook through without burning. Indirect heat is also handy

For an indirect charcoal grill fire, ignite the charcoal. Once it's burning well, bank the coals to one side or split and bank the coals against two opposite sides of the grill. The part of the grate not above the coals is your indirect heat (cool) zone.

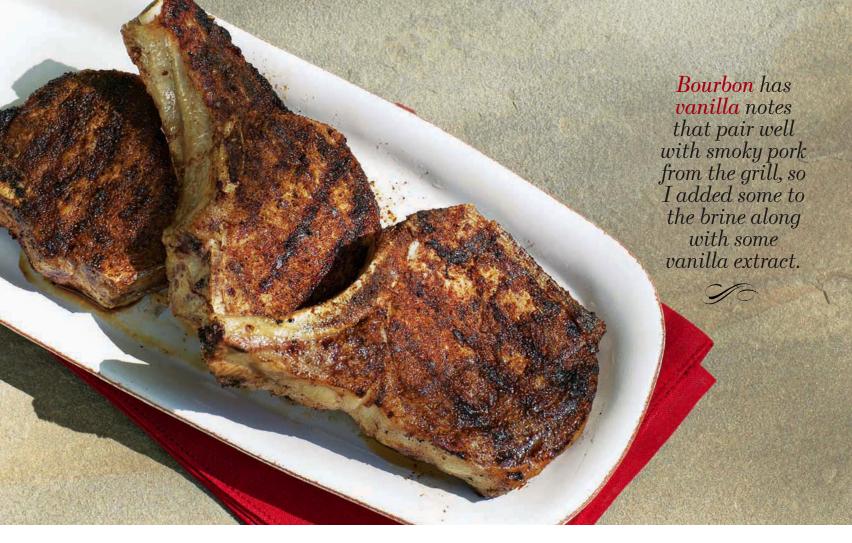
for combatting flare-ups. Here's how I like to set up my fire:

For an indirect gas grill fire, heat the grill with all burners on medium; then turn off one or more of the burners. The grate over the turned-off burners is your indirect heat (cool) zone. Adjust the active burner(s) to achieve the required temperature.









bourbon-and-vanilla-brined pork chops

For even more smoky flavor, I throw some hardwood chips that have been soaked in water for 30 minutes over the coals before grilling these chops. Grill a few halved, pitted, ripe peaches and serve them with the chops, if you like. **Serves 4**

FOR THE BRINE

- 1 oz. kosher salt (¼ cup if using Diamond Crystal; 2 Tbs. if using Morton)
- 1/4 cup bourbon
- 3 Tbs. dark brown sugar
- 2 Tbs. unsulfured molasses
- 2 tsp. pure vanilla extract
- 4 bone-in pork rib chops (11/4 to 11/2 inches thick; 2 to 3 lb. total)

FOR THE SPICE RUB

- 1 Tbs. sweet Hungarian paprika
- 1 Tbs. dark brown sugar
- 1 Tbs. kosher salt
- 1 Tbs. freshly ground black pepper
- 2 tsp. ground dried sage
- 1½ tsp. dry mustard
- 1 tsp. ground cayenne
- 1 tsp. ground cumin
- 1 tsp. ground coriander
- ½ tsp. ground ginger
- 1/4 tsp. ground cinnamon

BRINE THE PORK CHOPS

In a large mixing bowl, combine 2 cups warm water with the brine ingredients; stir until dissolved. Add 1 cup ice to the bowl and stir to quickly cool the brine to at least 45°F.

Put the chops in a 9x9-inch (or similar size) baking dish and pour the brine over the chops. They should be submerged. Cover with plastic wrap and put on a tray (in case of spills); refrigerate for 3 to 4 hours (3 hours for thinner chops, 4 hours for thicker ones).

Remove the chops from the brine (discard the brine), and pat them dry.

MAKE THE SPICE RUB

Combine all of the spice rub ingredients in a small bowl or jar. (The spice rub will keep in an airtight container at room temperature for up to 2 months.)

GRILL THE CHOPS

Prepare a gas or charcoal grill fire for indirect cooking over medium-high heat (400°F to 450°F).

Sprinkle 2 to 3 Tbs. total of the spice rub generously over all sides of the chops. Grill the chops over direct heat, flipping once, until dark brown grill marks form on both sides, about 2 minutes per side (move them to indirect heat if any flare-ups occur). Once the chops are well marked, move them to the cooler side of the grill, cover, and cook until their internal temperature registers 140°F to 145°F on an instant-read thermometer, 4 to 6 minutes more per side. Transfer the chops to a serving platter, tent loosely with foil, and let rest for 5 minutes before serving.

TIP

I always brine pork before grilling it. It's a

mild, lean meat that needs the extra flavor and moisture that brining provides.



bacon burgers with bacon-onion-balsamic jam

Use the best bacon you can find to make these burgers; I like to use dry-cured, applewood-smoked bacon. The bacon-onion jam can be made a day or two ahead and gently reheated before spooning it onto the burgers. **Serves 4**

FOR THE JAM

- 4 thick slices applewood-smoked bacon, cut crosswise into ½-inch strips
- 1 large red onion, halved and thinly sliced Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 1/3 cup balsamic vinegar
- 1/2 tsp. Dijon mustard

FOR THE BURGERS

- 2 thick slices applewood-smoked bacon
- 1½ lb. ground beef (85% lean)
- ½ tsp. Worcestershire sauce Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 4 hamburger buns, split

MAKE THE JAM

In a heavy-duty 12-inch skillet, cook the bacon over medium heat until lightly browned but not yet crisp, about 8 minutes. Transfer the bacon to paper towels to drain. Pour off all but 2 to 3 Tbs. of bacon fat from the skillet.

Add the onion to the skillet, season with a little salt and pepper, cover the pan, and cook for 2 minutes. Uncover, add a splash of water, and scrape up any browned bits from the bottom of the skillet. Cover, and continue to cook, stirring occasionally, until the onions are soft and beginning to color, about 10 minutes. Add the vinegar, mustard, and 1/3 cup water. Return the bacon to the skillet and bring the mixture to a simmer. Simmer, uncovered, until the liquid has thickened and most of it has been absorbed, 2 to 4 minutes. Transfer to a small bowl and let cool slightly. Cover with plastic wrap and leave at room temperature for up to 2 hours, or refrigerate for up to 2 days and gently reheat before serving.

MAKE THE BURGERS

With a sharp knife or food processor, mince the bacon. Transfer to a large mixing bowl, and add the ground beef, Worcestershire, 1 tsp. salt, and ½ tsp. pepper. Using a fork, gently toss until well mixed but not overworked. Form into 4 equal patties, each ¾ to 1 inch thick. Press your thumb in the center of each patty to create a deep depression.

Prepare a gas or charcoal grill fire for indirect cooking over medium-high heat (400°F to 450°F). Grill the burgers over direct heat until grill marks form, 4 to 5 minutes (move them to indirect heat if any flare-ups occur). Flip the burgers and cook for 4 to 5 minutes more for medium (a faintly pink center). For more well done, cook an additional minute.

Transfer the burgers to a plate and tent them with aluminum foil. Toast the cut sides of the buns on the grill until golden grill marks form, about 1 minute. Serve the burgers on the buns, topped with a rounded ¼ cup of the jam.

Making an indentation in the center of each burger keeps them from swelling up into mini basketballs on the grill.

rib-eye steaks rubbed with coffee and cocoa

The spice rub recipe here makes enough for 8 steaks; keep the leftover rub in an airtight container at room temperature for up to 2 months. I also use it on pork and chicken. Serves 4

- 1 Tbs. finely ground espresso coffee beans
- 1 Tbs. pure ancho or New Mexico chile powder
- 1 tsp. natural cocoa powder
- 1 tsp. granulated garlic
- 1/2 tsp. ground cumin
- ½ tsp. turbinado sugar or brown sugar
- ½ tsp. ground fennel seed
- 1/8 tsp. ground allspice Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 2 boneless rib-eye steaks, 11/4 to 11/2 inches thick (about 2 lb. total)

In a small bowl, combine the espresso, chile powder, cocoa, garlic, cumin, sugar, fennel, allspice, 4 tsp. salt, and 2 tsp. pepper. Rub 1½ Tbs. of the mixture all over each steak. Cover and let rest for 1 hour at room temperature.

Prepare a gas or charcoal grill fire for indirect cooking over medium-high heat (400°F to

Grill the steaks over direct heat until grill marks form on one side, about 2 minutes. Flip and grill the other side for 2 minutes more. Move the steaks to indirect heat, cover, and continue to cook until the internal tempera-

ture registers 125°F degrees on an instantread thermometer (for medium rare), 1 to 3 minutes more per side. Transfer the steaks to a cutting board and tent loosely with foil. Let rest for 10 minutes and then cut each steak in half and serve.

TIP

Let the steaks rest before and after

grilling—before so the steak isn't refrigerator-cold when it hits the grill, and after so the iuice redistributes for moist. tender steaks.

five-spice chicken with hoisin-maple glaze

Unless you're feeding all white-meat lovers or all dark-meat lovers, grill an assortment of chicken legs, thighs, breasts, and-my favorite-wings. Serves 4 to 6

- 2 Tbs. dark brown sugar
- 1 Tbs. sweet Hungarian paprika
- 1 Tbs. minced fresh garlic (about 3 large cloves)
- 21/2 tsp. Chinese five-spice powder
 - 1 tsp. ground fennel seed
 - 1 tsp. dry mustard Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 3 lb. bone-in chicken pieces (legs, thighs, breasts, and wings)
- 14 cup hoisin sauce
- 2 Tbs. pure maple syrup
- 1 Tbs. soy sauce
- 1 Tbs. honey
- 2 tsp. Asian sesame oil
- 2 tsp. minced fresh ginger
- 14 cup peanut or canola oil

In a small bowl, combine the brown sugar, paprika, garlic, 2 tsp. of the five-spice, fennel, mustard, 1 Tbs. salt, and 2 tsp. pepper. Put the chicken pieces in a 9x13-inch baking dish and rub the spice mix all over the chicken. Cover and refrigerate for at least 2 hours and no more than 6 hours.

Prepare a charcoal or gas grill fire for indirect cooking over medium heat (325°F to 375°F). In a small bowl, combine the hoisin, maple syrup, soy sauce, honey, sesame oil, ginger, and the remaining 1/2 tsp. five-spice powder.

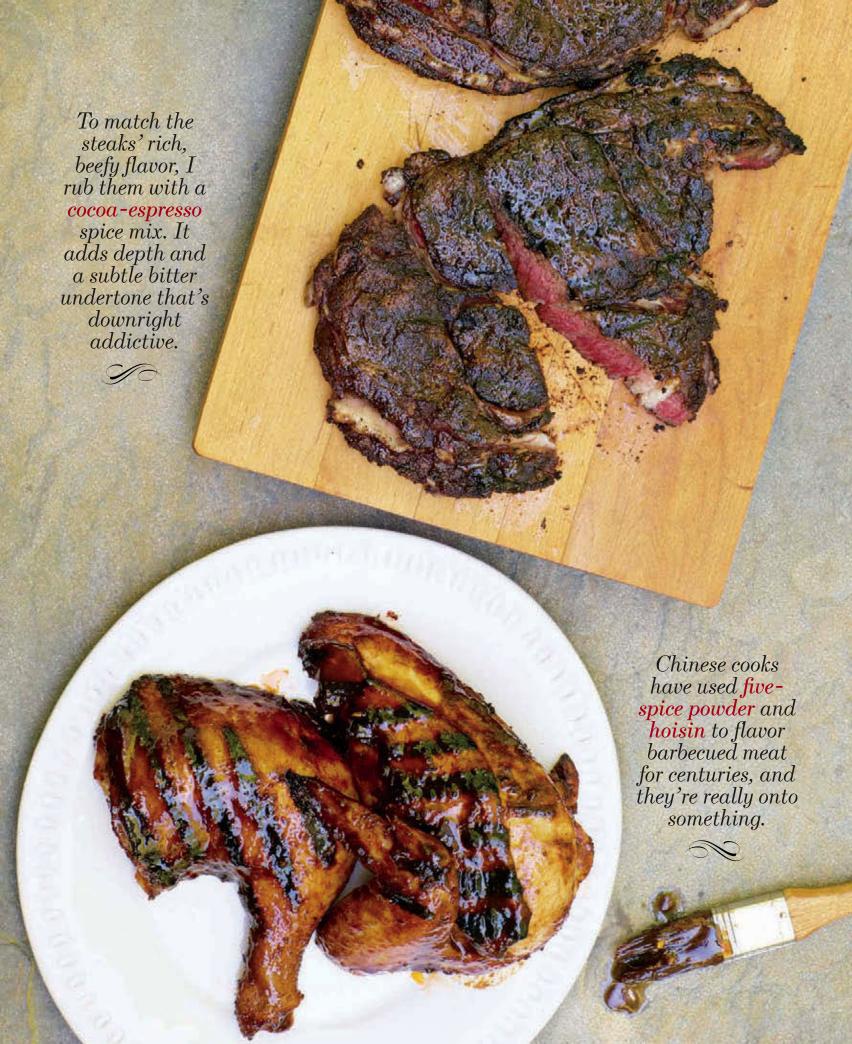
Lightly brush the chicken pieces with the peanut oil and arrange skin side down over direct heat. Cover and cook until grill marks form, 3 to 5 minutes. If the chicken flares up, immediately move it to indirect heat. Flip the chicken and mark the other side, 2 minutes more. Move the chicken to the cooler side of the grill to finish cooking over indirect heat. Cover and cook, occasionally rearranging the pieces to ensure even cooking, until an instant-read thermometer registers 165°F (breast pieces) to 170°F (leg pieces), 30 to 45 minutes.

Generously brush the glaze on the chicken and flip glaze side down over to the hotter part of the grill. Cook until the glaze is bubbly and deep red, 30 to 60 seconds. Brush more glaze on the top of the chicken, flip, and cook for 30 to 60 seconds more. Serve immediately. TIP

Indirect grilling is a must for chicken

on the bone so the chicken can cook through before the outside burns. Don't glaze the chicken until just before it's done, or the glaze will burn: watch for flare-ups after the glaze goes on.





Tequila and fresh citrus are a great combo in margaritas and also with pork ribs. The tequila's bite and the acidic orange and lime juices cut through the rich, fatty meat.



margarita-glazed baby back ribs

I'm a big fan of eating ribs with a dipping sauce—the sauce adds an extra rush of flavor, and it's messy, which I like. In this recipe, I turned the marinade into both a glaze and a dipping sauce for the ribs. Serves 4

FOR THE MARINADE

- 1/3 cup fresh orange juice (from 1 medium orange)
- 1/4 cup fresh lime juice (from 2 medium limes)
- 1/4 cup blanco (silver) tequila
- Tbs. dark agave syrup or honey
- Tbs. extra-virgin olive oil
- Tbs. Cointreau (optional)
- Tbs. soy sauce
- Tbs. minced fresh garlic (about 3 large
- Tbs. pure New Mexico or ancho chile powder
- 2 tsp. finely grated lime zest
- 1 tsp. ground cumin Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 2 racks pork baby back ribs (about 11/2 lb. each), membrane removed

FOR THE GLAZE AND SAUCE

- ½ cup blanco (silver) tequila
- 1/2 cup fresh orange juice
- 1/4 cup fresh lime juice; more to taste
- 2 Tbs. dark agave syrup or honey; more to taste
- 1/4 cup chopped fresh cilantro

MARINATE THE RIBS

In a medium bowl, whisk the orange and lime juices, tequila, agave, oil, Cointreau (if using), soy sauce, garlic, chile powder, lime zest, cumin, 1 Tbs. salt, and 1 tsp. pepper. Cut each slab of ribs in half and put in a large resealable freezer bag; pour the marinade over the ribs. Seal the bag and shake to coat the pork with the marinade. Lay the bag in a pan in case the bag leaks; refrigerate overnight, turning the bag from time to time to redistribute the marinade.

GRILL THE RIBS

Prepare a gas or charcoal grill fire for indirect



Remove the ribs from the marinade, shaking off the excess. Pour the marinade into a small saucepan and set aside.

Arrange the ribs bone side down over indirect heat. (You may need to use a rib rack to accommodate all of the ribs; see Test Kitchen, p. 87.) Cover the grill and maintain a grill temperature between 250°F and 300°F degrees.

The ribs are ready when the meat is tender and begins to pull away from the ends of the bones. This will take 1 to 2 hours.

MAKE THE GLAZE

While the ribs are grilling, add the tequila, orange juice, lime juice, and agave syrup to the reserved marinade. Bring to a boil over medium-high heat; then reduce the heat to maintain a steady simmer. Simmer until just beginning to turn syrupy, 15 to 25 minutes.

FINISH THE RIBS

Increase the grill heat to medium high and generously brush the meat side of each slab of ribs with the glaze. Grill glaze side down over direct heat until shiny and beginning to darken, 3 to 5 minutes. Watch for flare-ups. Brush the bone side with some sauce, flip, and grill 3 to 5 minutes more. Transfer the ribs to a cutting board, tent loosely with foil, and let rest for 10 minutes.

Taste the remaining glaze and add more lime, agave, or salt as needed. Stir in the cilantro. Divide among 4 small bowls. Slice the ribs and serve with the sauce on the side for dipping.

Bruce Aidells is a chef, founder of Aidells Sausage Company, and the author of 10 cookbooks, including The Complete Meat Cookbook. □

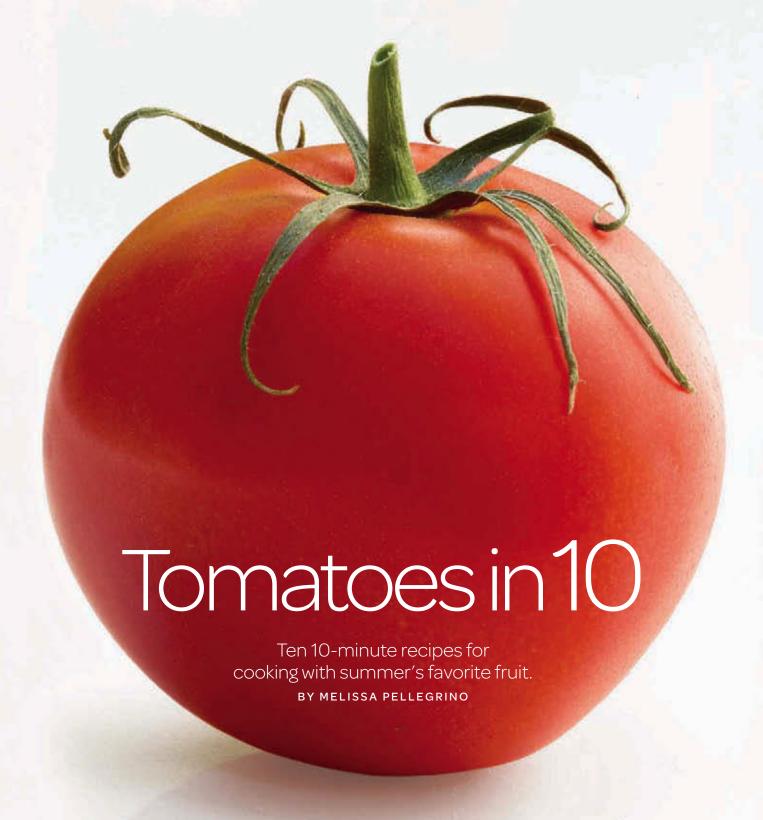
TIP

Start checking the ribs for doneness

after an hour; the meat should begin pulling away from the tips of the rib bones. When that happens, cut off a little piece of meat and taste it. If it's tender, the ribs are done.



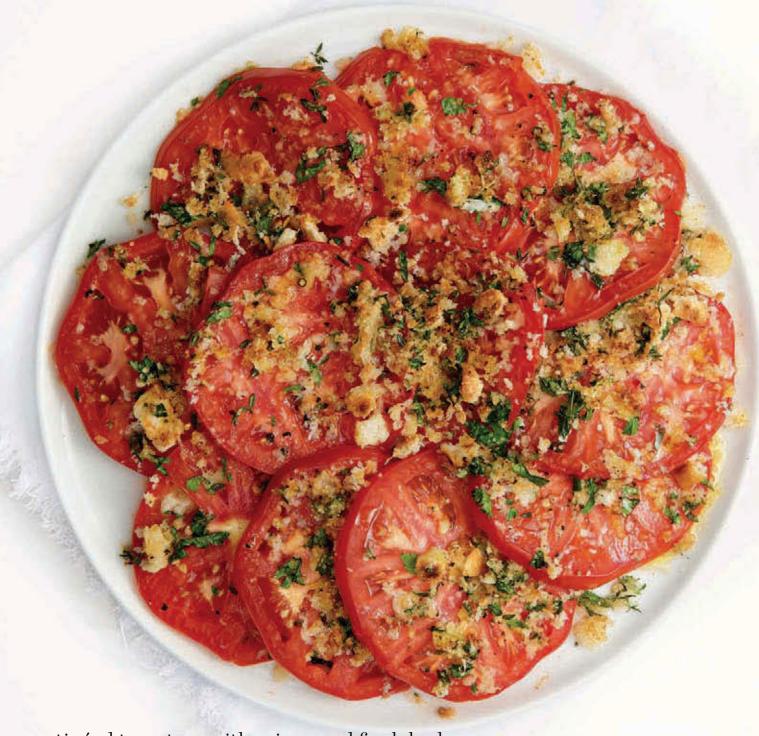




EVERY SPRING, I vow to practice restraint when planting my garden, especially when it comes to tomatoes. But year after year, I fail miserably. I just can't resist all the wonderful tomato varieties out there, and come summer, my garden overflows and my kitchen fills with baskets of the juicy, ripe fruit.

The truth is, for a cook, too many tomatoes is never a bad thing. Naturally, I like to make long-simmering sauces and put up some whole tomatoes for enjoying during the winter, but I've also developed a repertoire of fresh tomato recipes for those days when I don't have a lot of time to cook (or it's too hot to turn on the stove).

So grab some ripe tomatoes from your own garden or a farmers' market, and get cooking. These recipes are so quick, you'll be back out in the garden before you know it.



gratinéed tomatoes with asiago and fresh herbs

Sprinkle slices of ripe tomato with cheesy, herb-flecked breadcrumbs and then quickly run them under the broiler until the crumbs are browned and crisp. Serve with grilled or broiled steak or chicken.

Position a rack 6 inches from the broiler element and heat the broiler on high. Slice 3 medium **beefsteak tomatoes** ¼ inch thick and arrange the slices in a 10x12-inch (or similar size) broiler-safe baking dish in a

single, slightly overlapping layer. Sprinkle with ¼ tsp. kosher salt. Mix ¼ cup coarse fresh breadcrumbs, ¼ cup finely grated Asiago cheese, 1 Tbs. chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley, 1 tsp. coarsely chopped fresh thyme,

2 tsp. extra-virgin olive oil, a pinch of salt, and ½ tsp. pepper. Sprinkle evenly over the tomatoes. Broil until the breadcrumbs are a deep golden-brown, 2 to 3 minutes. Drizzle with more olive oil and serve. Serves 6.



tomato and grilled zucchini stacks

This appetizer is as easy as layering grilled zucchini and ripe tomato, and topping it with ricotta flavored with green peppercorns and fresh herbs.

Prepare a medium-high gas or charcoal grill fire. Brush twelve 1/4-inch-thick slices zucchini (cut on the diagonal from 1 medium zucchini) all over with 1½ tsp. extra-virgin olive oil. Grill until lightly browned and barely tender, 1 to 2 minutes per side. Set aside. In a small bowl, mix 1/2 cup whole-milk ricotta, 1 tsp. sliced fresh chives, 1 tsp. chopped fresh mint, 1/2 tsp. freshly ground green peppercorns, and a pinch of flaky sea salt (such as Maldon). Season twelve ½-inch-thick ripe beefsteak tomato slices and the zucchini slices on both sides with salt and freshly ground black pepper. To assemble, put a tomato slice on each of four plates. Top each with a slice of zucchini. Repeat two more times. Drizzle each stack with 1 tsp. extravirgin olive oil, top with a dollop of the ricotta mixture, and serve. Serves 4.



tomato, chickpea, and feta salad

Za'atar—a Middle Eastern spice blend treasured for its savory thyme-oregano flavor—adds a lovely herbal quality to this easy side salad. (For more on za'atar, including a recipe, see Test Kitchen, p. 87.)

Mix 3 oz. crumbled feta (about ½ cup), 2 tsp. za'atar, and a pinch crushed red pepper flakes in a small bowl. Add 1 Tbs. extra-virgin olive oil and let sit. Put 1 lb. halved assorted cherry tomatoes in a large bowl. Rinse and pat dry one 15-oz. can chickpeas and add them to the tomatoes. Season with 1/4 tsp. kosher salt and a few grinds of black pepper. Add 2 Tbs. extra-virgin olive oil and 1 Tbs. white wine vinegar. Stir in the feta, season to taste with salt and pepper, and serve. Serves 6.







peach, pancetta, lettuce, and tomato sandwiches

In this riff on a BLT, pancetta stands in for bacon and peaches add a sweet note. Use pre-sliced pancetta—it's very thin and cooks up quickly.

Position a rack 6 inches from the broiler element and heat the broiler on high.

Arrange 8 oz. thinly sliced **pancetta** on a large rimmed baking sheet. Broil until crisp, 2 to 3 minutes. Transfer to a paper-towellined plate. Halve an 18-inch **baguette** lengthwise. Put the bread cut side up on the oven rack and broil until golden, about 1 minute. Spread 1 to 2 Tbs. **mayonnaise** on the bottom half of the baguette. Thinly

slice 2 medium ripe **beefsteak tomatoes** and 1 large ripe pitted **peach**. Lay the tomato slices over the bread and season lightly with **kosher salt** and freshly ground **black pepper**. Lay the peach slices, pancetta, and 4 **Boston lettuce leaves** over the tomatoes. Replace the top half of the bread, cut the sandwich into 4 pieces, and serve. **Serves 4**.

grilled tomatoes with saba and sea salt

Saba is a syrupy condiment from Italy made from reduced unfermented grape juice. Balsamic vinegar is a good substitution if reduced until slightly syrupy.

Prepare a medium-high gas or charcoal grill fire. Brush the cut sides of 8 halved ripe plum tomatoes with 1 Tbs. extra-virgin olive oil. Grill the tomatoes cut side down until browned, 2 to 3 minutes. Transfer to a platter, cut side up. Drizzle with 3 Tbs. saba and sprinkle with flaky sea salt (such as Maldon) to taste. Serve immediately. Serves 8.

Local Tomatoes Are Best

Any fresh, ripe tomato will work well in these recipes, but for the best flavor and texture, seek out locally grown tomato varieties. Here are some of my favorites:



CHERRY TOMATOES

These small, juicy tomatoes come in red, orange, and yellow and are sweeter than candy. I always grow Sweet 100 and Yellow Pear tomatoes—whole or halved, they're a great size for salads of all kinds, including the chickpea-feta salad at left.



BEEFSTEAK TOMATOES

Beefsteak tomatoes, of which there are many varieties, are all large, with thick, plump flesh and relatively few seeds. I adore their intense tomato flavor, and their size makes them ideal for sandwiches (like the one above) or stacks of grilled veggies (opposite, top left). Yellow Brandywine and Mr. Stripey are two excellent beefsteak varieties.



PLUM TOMATOES

Plum (or paste) tomatoes are known for their medium size, meaty flesh, relatively low water content, minimal seeds, and deep tomato flavor. They're perfect for sauce—either a traditional cooked sauce or a no-cook sauce (like the one on page 49)—and they grill well, too (see above). Roma VF, Heidi, and San Marzano are all delicious choices.

baked provolone with tomatoes, marjoram, and balsamic

Thick slices of provolone baked under a tangy-sweet tomato topping make a to-die-for starter or a light lunch with a green salad. Serve with warm, crusty bread.

Position a rack in the center of the oven and heat the oven to 450°F. Arrange four 5- to 6-inch individual shallow gratin dishes on a rimmed baking sheet. Distribute four 1/4-inch-thick rounds of provolone among the dishes. In a small bowl, combine 1 small-diced medium ripe beefsteak tomato, 1 minced small clove garlic, 1 Tbs. extra-virgin olive oil, 1 tsp. chopped fresh marjoram (or oregano), 1/4 tsp. kosher salt, and a few grinds of black pepper. Portion the mixture among the four dishes, scattering it over and around the cheese. Bake until the cheese is slightly melted, about 5 minutes. Drizzle each serving with 14 tsp. balsamic vinegar and serve immediately. Serves 4.

tomato "caponata"

This summery relish is reminiscent of Sicilian caponata, minus the eggplant and anchovies. It's great with grilled seafood (think sardines, swordfish, or scallops) or just served over slices of grilled bread.

Combine 34 cup finely diced red onion, 2 Tbs. red wine vinegar, 1/4 tsp. granulated sugar, and 14 tsp. kosher salt in a small bowl. Cut 3 cored large ripe beefsteak tomatoes into small dice. In a large bowl, combine the tomatoes with 1/2 cup chopped pitted green olives, 1/4 cup finely chopped caper berries, 1 Tbs. extravirgin olive oil, 1 tsp. finely grated lemon zest, and ½ tsp. salt. Drain the onion mixture (discard the liquid) and add it to the tomato mixture. Gently stir in 3 Tbs. toasted pine nuts and 1 Tbs. chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley. Season to taste with salt and freshly ground black pepper







tomatoes and burrata with tapenade

Burrata (a fresh Italian cheese similar to mozzarella but with a creamy center; for more information, see Test Kitchen, p. 87) is a luscious addition to this updated Caprese salad. If you can't find it, use fresh mozzarella.

Cut 12 oz. **burrata** and 3 medium ripe **beefsteak tomatoes** into %-inch-thick slices. Arrange the burrata on a platter, alternating with

the tomatoes. Sprinkle with **kosher salt** and freshly ground **black pepper**. Tear 6 large **fresh basil leaves** into pieces and scatter them over all. Dollop with 4 tsp. store-bought or homemade **olive tapenade** (see Test Kitchen, p. 87, for a recipe). Drizzle with 1 Tbs. **extra-virgin olive oil** and serve. **Serves 4 as a starter or 6 as a side**.

Melissa Pellegrino is a Fine Cooking contributing editor. \square

no-cook tomato sauce

Ripe tomatoes don't need to be cooked to turn into a delicious pasta sauce. Just chop and mix with garlic, fresh herbs, chile (for a bit of heat), and olive oil.

Put ¼ cup tightly packed **fresh flat-leaf parsley leaves**, 1 smashed medium clove **garlic**, and 1 seeded small **hot red chile** (like Fresno, serrano, or jalapeño) on a cutting board. Mince the ingredients together; transfer to a medium bowl. Cut 2½ lb. ripe **plum tomatoes** into ½-inch dice. Add the tomatoes and 2 Tbs. **extra-virgin olive oil** to the bowl with the parsley mixture. Season to taste with **kosher salt**, and serve. **Yields 4 cups**, **enough for 1 lb. of dried pasta**.

tomato-ginger dressing

This refreshing salad dressing comes together in the blender in no time.

Put 1 coarsely chopped medium ripe beefsteak tomato, 1 Tbs. unseasoned rice vinegar, ½ Tbs. grated fresh ginger, a small pinch of ground cayenne, and ¼ tsp. kosher salt in a blender. Purée until smooth. With the motor running, gradually add 2 Tbs. extra-virgin olive oil. Season to taste with more salt. The dressing will keep for at least 1 week in the refrigerator. Yields about 1 cup.



For sources, see Where to Buy It FINECOOKING.COM $49\,$

Bouillabaisse This hearty fish stew is a treasure from the South of France. Our step-by-step guide will help you master it. BY ALLISON EHRI KREITLER Small potatoes cooked in the fish broth add heft to the stew. They're a relatively recent addition to bouillabaisse, appearing over the last century. Saffron, fennel, and orange flavor the rich fish broth. This uniquely Provençal flavor trinity makes bouillabaisse taste unlike any other fish stew. The broth is also used to cook the potatoes and make the rouille. 50 fine cooking • Aug/Sept 2011





Bouillabaisse has the power to transport me to the Vieux Port de Marseilles in a single bite. It's a hearty, brothy fish stew with a near-perfect flavor balance of fresh seafood, saffron, fennel, and orange, served with rouilleslathered croutons. Just one taste and I hear the calls of waiters enticing me into their bistros as sailboat halyards ping against masts in the background.

The Marseillais take their bouillabaisse (pronounced BOO-ya-behs) very seriously and claim that it cannot be made anywhere else. Not so. I've lived in France, and I know from experience that a wonderful bouillabaisse can be made in any kitchen in any country.

The foundation of a great bouillabaisse is the fish broth. It's traditional to make it with several fish varieties so each can add its own flavor. You don't, however, need to import fish from the



Toast the croutons in the oven until golden; then turn the oven off and let them dry completely.



Add water to the aromatics, vegetables, herbs, spices, and fish parts to make the broth.

bouillabaisse

This impressive stew takes 3 to 4 hours to prepare, but each of the elements is easy to make. You can toast the croutons a day ahead, but the other components are best eaten the day they're made. For the full Marseilles experience, serve with a dry rosé from Provence and a tangy lemon tart for dessert. Serves 8

FOR THE CROUTONS

2 slender baguettes, sliced into forty 1/2-inch-thick rounds (reserve remaining baguette for rouille)

Position a rack in the center of the oven and heat the oven to 450°F. Arrange the baguette rounds on a large rimmed baking sheet and bake until crisp and lightly golden, about

10 minutes. Turn off the oven, open the door partially, and let the croutons cool and finish drying in the oven 1. Store in an airtight container for up to 1 day.

FOR THE FISH BROTH

- 36 mussels, debearded and scrubbed
- 1/4 cup extra-virgin olive oil
- 4 large cloves garlic, very roughly chopped
- 2 medium yellow onions, diced
- medium fennel bulbs with about 5 inches of stems (about 11/2 lb. each), diced
- 2 medium leeks, diced and washed well
- medium celery stalk, sliced
- 31/2 lb. fish skeletons, heads, and trimmings (from firm white fish), gills removed
- 6 medium ripe tomatoes, diced

- 4 sprigs fresh flat-leaf parsley
- 3 large sprigs fresh thyme
- 2 dried bay leaves Zest of 1 large orange, white pith removed
- 2 Tbs. pastis, such as Ricard or Pernod
- 2 tsp. fennel seeds
- 1/2 tsp. black peppercorns Fine sea salt
- 1/2 tsp. very loosely packed saffron threads

Put the mussels and 1 cup of water in a 4- to 5-quart pot. Cover, bring to a boil over high heat, and cook until all the mussels have opened, about 2 minutes. Set a strainer over a small bowl. Shuck the mussels into the strainer, discarding the shells. Press on the mussels to squeeze out any remaining liquid; Mediterranean. Instead, buy the freshest sustainable fish available to you locally (see page 54), and pass the cooked broth ingredients through a food mill so you get every last drop of flavor from them. It makes all the difference.

The rest of the soup comes together easily: Marinate four kinds of white fish fillets and then poach them in the fish broth. Cook the potatoes in the broth, too. Simple croutons topped with rouille—a coarse paste of garlic, cayenne, breadcrumbs, cooked potato, fish broth, and olive oil—bring a garlicky note to the dish and soak up the fragrant broth.

Sure, bouillabaisse takes an afternoon to make, but it's a showstopping all-in-one meal that's absolutely worth the effort. Try it, and you'll soon feel the warm Mediterranean breeze and hear the slap of the waves against the fishing boats in the harbor—all without leaving home.



To extract flavor and give the broth body, grind the cooked broth ingredients in a food mill.



The oil in the broth separates, so use an immersion blender to emulsify it, or whisk vigorously.

discard the solids. Strain the mussel-cooking liquid into the bowl and set aside.

Heat the oil in a wide 8- to 10-quart pot over medium heat. Add the garlic and onions, cover, and cook, stirring occasionally, until softened but not colored, about 8 minutes. Add the fennel, leeks, and celery and cook, covered, stirring occasionally, until completely soft but not colored, about 20 minutes.

While the vegetables cook, use a chef's knife or kitchen scissors to cut the fish skeletons into 4- to 5-inch pieces. Add the fish skeletons, heads, and trimmings to the pot, along with the tomatoes, parsley, thyme, bay leaves, orange zest, pastis, fennel seeds, peppercorns, 2 tsp. salt, and the reserved mussel liquid. Add enough cold water to just

cover the solids when you press them down gently (about 1 quart) 2. Bring to a gentle simmer over medium heat and cook, uncovered, until you can easily break the fish parts with a wooden spoon, about 30 minutes. Break apart as many of the fish parts as you can with the spoon.

Put a food mill over a large bowl and, working in batches, grind the cooked broth ingredients 3, discarding the solids left in the food mill between batches. Clean the pot and put a fine strainer over it. Working in batches, strain the broth, pushing hard on the solids with a ladle to squeeze out all the liquid, and discarding the solids between batches.

Crumble the saffron into the broth and bring to a boil to infuse the saffron. Turn off

the heat and use an immersion blender to emulsify the broth 4, or whisk vigorously. Season to taste with salt. Set aside. A thin, greasy skin will form on top of the broth as it sits—skim it off before cooking the potatoes.

FOR THE FISH

- 3½ lb. moderately firm, skin-on, scaled white fish fillets (use 4 types of fish—see p. 54 for options—14 oz. of each)
 - 1 Tbs. pastis, such as Ricard or Pernod Fine sea salt and freshly ground black pepper

While the broth cooks, cut the fish fillets so you have 8 pieces of each type of fish. Use a scale; each piece should be about 1¾ oz. (If you have more than 14 oz. of any type of fish, trim off the thinner parts—the tail pieces

Choose Lean, Firm White Fish

If the Marseillais had their way, bouillabaisse would be made with at least four (but preferably more) varieties of local Mediterranean fish, including scorpion fish, conger eel, sea robin, and monkfish. It would also be made only within 100 kilometers of the city.

But the truth is, any combination of four fresh, lean, moderately firm varieties of white fish will make a delicious bouillabaisse. (Look for local and sustainable choices; the Monterey Bay Aquarium's Seafood Watch and the Blue Ocean Institute's Seafood Guide are two reliable sources for information.) Some good options:

- Atlantic pollock (wild, domestic or Canadian)
- Barramundi (farmed, domestic)
- Black rockfish (also known as black rock cod and black snapper; hook-and-line caught, Alaska)
- Black sea bass (wild, north- and mid-Atlantic waters)
- Halibut (wild, Pacific)
- Pacific cod (bottom longline-caught, domestic)
- Pacific lingcod (not actually a cod, but a member of the greenling family; wild, domestic or Canadian)
- Porgy (also known as scup; wild, Atlantic)
- Sablefish (also known as black cod; wild, Alaska or British Columbia)
- Striped bass (wild or farmed, domestic)



For even more fennel flavor, drizzle the fish fillets with pastis (an anise-flavored liqueur) before cooking.



Parcook the potatoes in the fish broth (they should still feel slightly firm when cut into); then let them finish cooking off-heat in the hot broth.

and belly flaps—first and add them to the fish broth.) Put the fish in a large baking dish, keeping the same types of fish together (so you can keep track of each type).

Marinate the fish 45 minutes before you plan to finish the stew: Drizzle the fish with the pastis and sprinkle with 1 tsp. salt and ½ tsp. pepper. Turn the fish to coat evenly 5, still keeping the same types of fish together. Let the fish marinate in the refrigerator for 30 minutes; then let sit at room temperature for 15 minutes before cooking.

FOR THE POTATOES

134 lb. small white or yellow potatoes (about 8), peeled and sliced into 3/4-inch-thick rounds, ends discarded About 3 cups Fish Broth (p. 52)

Put the potatoes in a 4- to 5-quart pot. Add enough fish broth to cover completely, about 3 cups. Bring to a boil over high heat, reduce the heat, and simmer until slightly undercooked and still a little firm in the centers 6, about 8 minutes. Set aside off the heat—the potatoes will finish cooking in the hot broth.

FOR THE ROUILLE

- 2 medium cloves garlic, very coarsely chopped Fine sea salt
 - Cayenne
- 1 cup fresh crustless coarse breadcrumbs (use reserved baguette from croutons)
- 6 Tbs. fish broth (from cooking potatoes)
- 3 slices cooked potato
- 1/4 cup extra-virgin olive oil

In a mortar, mash the garlic and ¼ tsp. each salt and cayenne with a pestle. Mash in the breadcrumbs and broth. Mash in the potato. Mash in the oil a little at a time . The rouille should be fairly thick and spreadable. Don't overmash, or it will get gummy. Season to taste with more salt and cayenne; it should be pleasantly spicy. (Alternatively, mash the garlic and salt to a paste on a cutting board with the side of a chef's knife. Transfer the paste to a bowl and use a fork to mash in the remaining ingredients. Don't use a food processor, because it makes a gummy rouille.)



Serve Bouillabaisse as a One-Bowl Meal

In France, bouillabaisse is most often eaten in restaurants, where it's served as a two-course meal. First, bowls of the aromatic fish broth are served with rouille croutons floating on top. Then, cooked whole fish are presented on a platter and filleted tableside. It's a dramatic presentation, to be sure, but it's not very practical for the home cook.

My bouillabaisse is served plated, with fish, broth, potatoes, and croutons in each bowl for an all-in-one meal. Use wide, shallow soup bowls for the best presentation. In a nod to tradition, I put the fish skin side up in each bowl to show off the different types of fish (plus, it's pretty that way). I like to serve additional fish broth in a warm sauce pitcher, and pass around bowls of extra croutons and rouille, too.



To make the rouille, mash garlic, breadcrumbs, broth, cooked potato, and olive oil in a mortar.



Use a paring knife to check the fish for doneness—the flesh should be opaque throughout.

TO FINISH THE STEW

Fine sea salt and freshly ground black pepper

2 Tbs. chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley

Warm 8 wide, shallow soup bowls and a sauce pitcher in a low oven. Top 16 of the croutons with a thin layer of the rouille (you won't use it all). Transfer the remaining rouille and croutons to 2 bowls to pass at the table.

Reheat the potatoes in their broth, but do not boil, or they will break apart. Meanwhile, bring the large pot of fish broth to a brisk simmer over medium-high heat. Use a slotted spatula to divide the potatoes among the warm serving bowls. Add the broth remaining from the potatoes to the large pot of fish broth and return to a brisk simmer.

Add the thicker pieces of fish to the simmering broth and then add the thinner pieces. If possible, try to keep the same types of fish together for easier plating. Poach until the thinner pieces are just cooked through, about 6 minutes 3. While the fish poaches, the broth should stay at a bare simmer; adjust the heat as necessary. Working quickly, use the slotted spatula to distribute the thinner pieces of fish, skin side up, among the bowls. Check to make sure the thicker pieces are cooked through and distribute them among the bowls. Each serving should get 4 types of fish.

Return the broth to a boil over high heat. Remove from the heat and use an immersion blender or whisk to emulsify the broth. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Ladle a generous amount of broth over each serving of fish. Transfer any remaining broth to the warm pitcher.

Nestle 2 rouille-topped croutons in each serving bowl and sprinkle with parsley. Serve immediately, passing the remaining croutons, rouille, and broth at the table.

Allison Ehri Kreitler is a recipe developer, food writer, and cooking instructor, as well as a Fine Cooking contributing editor.



Taco Night

Homemade corn tortillas and three tasty taco fillings (plus all the fixings) make a delicious dinner and an even better party. BY ROBB WALSH

I'LL NEVER FORGET my first homemade taco. It was 1962, and my friend's mom, Mrs. Snow, made it for me. She fried store-bought corn tortillas into taco shells and filled them with ground beef, iceberg lettuce, tomatoes, canned olives, and shredded yellow cheese. They were crunchy, salty, juicy, and beefy, and I'd never tasted anything so delicious.

Fast forward many years, and I find myself living in Houston, Texas, earning my living writing about tacos and other Tex-Mex specialties. These days, I make tacos for my family and friends every chance I get. But I'm not talking about what



I now think of as so-so tacos made with store-bought tortillas (sorry, Mrs. Snow). I mean tacos made with supple, handmade corn tortillas, savory fillings, and fresh salsas and toppings.

Here, I'll teach you how to make corn tortillas from scratch like a pro. I'll also share some of my favorite taco fillings—pineapple-glazed shrimp and tamarind-marinated chicken, both hot off the grill, and a smoky, spicy braised beef brisket. Round out the menu—whether it's a casual weekend dinner or a party with friends—with your favorite toppings and condiments, and you'll be on your way to the most delicious tacos *you've* ever tasted.

start with a drink sangría & beer

Tacos practically beg to be served with ice-cold beer. Try a couple of kinds of Mexican beer, like Bohemia and Dos Equis lager. Chilled white sangría spiked with tequila also goes well with the food. (Go to Fine Cooking.com/extras for a recipe.)

fresh corn tortillas

Tender, flavorful, homemade corn tortillas are worlds apart from their store-bought counterparts, and they make any taco taste better. Although not necessary, a tortilla press comes in handy; turn to p. 95 for an online source. Yields about 35 tortillas



To test the consistency of the tortilla dough, flatten a ball. If deep U-shaped cracks form around the edges, it's too dry; add more water and test again.



Use a tortilla press or the bottom of a wide, heavy pot to evenly flatten the dough. Pressing the dough between two pieces of plastic keeps it from sticking.



The tortillas are done cooking when they're light brown in spots and appear dry. Wrap them in a barely damp dishtowel to keep them warm and flexible.

- Ib. (8 cups) fine-grind masa harina (such as Maseca or Goya Masarica brand)
- 4 to 5½ cups warm water (about 100°F)
- 1 tsp. kosher salt

Cut two 8-inch circles from a clean plastic grocery store bag or gallon-size zip-top bag; set aside.

In a large bowl, combine the masa harina, 4 cups of the warm water, and the salt. Mix and knead with your hands until the dough is smooth and homogenous, adding more water ¼ cup at a time as needed—the dough should feel like Play-Doh: flexible, soft, and smooth, not stiff. To test the dough, pinch off a bit, roll into a ball, and flatten between your palms. The dough should flatten easily, with few if any cracks forming around the edges. If deep U-shaped cracks form, add more water and test again.

Divide the dough into 2-oz. balls (about the size of golf balls), keeping them covered with a damp towel while you shape them.

Heat a large griddle over medium heat (or use two large skillets if you don't have a large griddle). Use a tortilla press or the bottom of a wide, heavy pot to flatten a dough ball between the two pieces of plastic into a 6-inch tortilla of even thickness. Peel off the top piece of plastic, flip the tortilla over onto your hand, and carefully peel off the other piece of plastic.

Slap the tortilla onto the griddle (this breaks any air bubbles) and cook, flipping once, until the surface is brown in spots and appears dry, 1 to 2 minutes per side. While the first tortilla cooks, shape and begin cooking another. Continue shaping and cooking the remaining tortillas in this manner. As they're done, wrap them in a slightly damp dishtowel to keep warm.

MAKE AHEAD

You can make the tortillas up to an hour before serving. Wrap them in a clean, slightly damp dishtowel, and then wrap the towel in foil. Keep warm in a 200°F oven.





Refried beans Perfect as a base for meaty taco fillings or as a side dish; pinto beans are my favorite.

Guacamole I like a coarse mash of avocado, garlic, and lime juice; it's ideal with seafood and chicken tacos.

Raw onion relish Chopped white onion with fresh cilantro and lime juice; it's a Tex-Mex taco truck staple.

Fresh salsa I usually serve salsa verde made with grilled tomatillos. If a tomato or mango salsa is more your thing, that's fine, too (go to FineCooking.com/extras for recipes). Or keep it simple with a good jarred salsa.

- Crumbled queso fresco
- Chopped ripe tomatoes
- Chopped red onion
- Chopped canned chipotles in adobo
- Shredded iceberg lettuce
- Thinly sliced radishes
- Chopped fresh, pickled, or grilled chiles, like jalapeños or serranos
- Lime wedges
- Sliced avocado
- Sour cream
- Small sprigs of fresh cilantro
- Bottled hot sauce, like Tabasco, Cholula, or Tapatio

shredded brisket with chipotle dressing

This luscious, spicy taco filling is based on salpicon, a shredded or chopped cold beef salad popular in Tex-Mex cuisine. I like to top brisket tacos with chopped tomatoes, radish slices, and shredded lettuce. Yields about 6 cups, enough for 30 tacos; serves 10

FOR THE BRISKET

- 4 lb. trimmed beef brisket, preferably the flat half
- 1 large yellow onion, chopped
- 10 black peppercorns
- 4 dried bay leaves
- 3 medium cloves garlic, crushed
- 2 serrano chiles, coarsely chopped
- 1 Tbs. kosher salt

FOR THE CHIPOTLE DRESSING

- 1/4 cup extra-virgin olive oil
- 1/4 cup fresh lime juice
- 1/4 cup red wine vinegar
- 2 medium cloves garlic, chopped Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 1 7-oz. can chipotles in adobo

COOK THE BRISKET

Put the brisket ingredients in a 6-quart Dutch oven and cover with 10 cups of water. Bring to a boil over high heat and then reduce the heat to maintain a simmer and partially cover. Simmer until the meat is falling-apart tender, about 4 hours. Add hot water as needed during cooking to keep the meat submerged. Transfer the brisket to a cutting board and let sit until cool enough to handle. Reserve the cooking liquid. Scrape away and discard any fat from the brisket. Using your fingers or two forks, tease the meat into shreds. Cut the shreds crosswise into 1-inch pieces. Transfer the meat to a medium mixing bowl and moisten with ½ cup of the reserved broth. Save the remaining broth for another use (such as the Beefy Chelada Cocktail at FineCooking.com/extras).

MAKE THE DRESSING

In a blender, pulse the olive oil, lime juice, vinegar, garlic, 2 tsp. salt, and ½ tsp. pepper until mixed. Drain the canned chipotles, pouring all of the adobo sauce into the blender. Add chipotles to taste and purée the dressing. (One chipotle will give the dressing a little heat, two or three will produce a medium-hot dressing, four or more will make a fiery dressing.) Chop any remaining chipotles and serve them on the side, if you like.

Add just enough of the dressing to the shredded beef to moisten it. Cover the bowl and chill it in the refrigerator for an hour or so.

TO SERVE

After chilling, the dressing will have pooled in the bottom of the bowl; toss to redistribute. Transfer the meat to a serving bowl or platter and drizzle with a little more dressing. Serve cold, as is customary, at room temperature, or warm. (You won't need all of the dressingserve the remainder on the side.)



MAKE AHEAD

You can make the beef brisket filling and the sauce up to five days ahead and refrigerate in airtight containers.







tex-mex grilled shrimp

Soy sauce, pineapple juice, and lime juice may sound like an unusual combination, but it's actually a very common Tex-Mex fajita marinade. These shrimp are excellent in tacos with guacamole and tangy tomatillo salsa.

Yields enough for 15 tacos

- 48 extra-jumbo shrimp (16 to 20 per lb.; about 21/2 lb. total), peeled and deveined
- 3 Tbs. extra-virgin olive oil; more for the grill Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 1/4 cup soy sauce
- 1/4 cup pineapple juice
- medium clove garlic, minced
- 1 medium lime

Soak sixteen 12-inch wooden skewers in water for 30 minutes. Meanwhile, prepare a high charcoal or gas grill fire.

Spear 6 of the shrimp through their head and tail ends with one of the skewers; then spear

the same six shrimp with another skewer about a third of the way from their back sides. Repeat with the remaining shrimp and skewers. Brush the shrimp with the olive oil and then season with 2 tsp. salt and a few grinds of pepper.



In a small bowl, combine the soy sauce, pineapple juice, and garlic. Finely grate the zest from the lime and add the zest to the soy sauce mixture; juice the lime and add the juice and the juiced peels. Set aside 3 Tbs. of the mixture in another small bowl.

Oil the grill grates. Put the shrimp on the grill in a single layer. Cook, covered, turning once and brushing a few times with the larger amount of soy sauce mixture, until just cooked through, 6 to 8 minutes. Brush with the reserved soy sauce mixture, remove the shrimp from the skewers, and serve.



Get recipes for a jícama slaw, a tequila-spiked sangría, a spicy beer cocktail, a tomatillo salsa, a mango salsa, and a roasted-tomato salsa, as well as a shopping list and timeline for this party, at FineCooking.com/extras.



grilled tamarind chicken

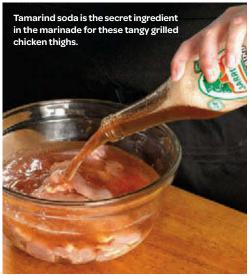
Here, chicken thighs are marinated in sweet-sour tamarind soda, garlic, and soy sauce, and then rubbed with a coriander-chile spice rub. If you can't find tamarind soda, use lemon, orange, or ginger soda, preferably made with real cane sugar. I like to garnish tacos made with this filling with chopped red onion, avocado slices, and a squeeze of fresh lime juice. Yields enough for 15 tacos

- 8 boneless, skinless chicken thighs (about 2 lb.)
- 1 12.5-oz. bottle tamarind soda (such as Jarritos brand; see Where to Buy It, p. 95)
- 1/2 cup soy sauce
- 3 medium cloves garlic, crushed
- 1 Tbs. ground coriander
- 2 tsp. pure chile powder, such as ancho Sea salt

Put the chicken in a large bowl and cover with the tamarind soda. Add the soy sauce and garlic and mix well. Refrigerate overnight. **Prepare a high** charcoal or gas grill fire for indirect grilling.

Remove the chicken from the marinade and pat it dry. In a small bowl, combine the coriander, chile powder, and a pinch of salt. Dust the thighs on both sides with the spice rub. Cook on the hot part of the grill until grill marks form on the bottom, 3 to 5 minutes. Turn and mark the other side, about 2 minutes more. Move the chicken to the cooler side of the grill and grill until cooked through, 7 to 10 minutes. Let the chicken rest on a cutting board for 5 minutes and then cut the meat into strips and serve.

Robb Walsh is an award-winning cookbook author who specializes in Tex-Mex cuisine. His most recent book is The Tex-Mex Grill and Backyard Barbacoa Cookbook. □



MAKE AHEAD

Marinate and refrigerate the chicken the night before. Grill the chicken up to 30 minutes before you plan to serve it.

EGGPUANT

Try it braised, grilled, stir-fried, or sautéed for delicious results, guaranteed.

BY KRISTINE KIDD

I REMEMBER THE MOMENT when I became an eggplant lover. It was late summer at the Santa Monica farmers' market, and I stood in front of a stand, transfixed by its display of richly colored eggplant varieties. Baskets overflowed with tiny purple-and-white-streaked Fairy Tales, fat, cream-color Claras, lavender-striped Calliopes, and shiny Black Beauties. The assortment was unlike anything at the grocery store. I filled my bag to bursting, as excited to find a favorite as I was to get cooking. Back home, I devoured plates of eggplant for a week straight—and then returned to that same stand the next week for more. I was in love.

Every summer since then, I've eagerly awaited the reappearance of this exotic-looking fruit. Not only is eggplant gorgeous, but it also has wonderfully complex, nutty flavor and luscious texture.

It undergoes an amazing transformation when cooked: When it's sliced and grilled, its edges become crisp and its center, creamy. Braised eggplant turns succulent, readily soaking up the flavors with which it's cooked. Stir-fried eggplant is meltingly tender and the perfect canvas for bright, bold seasonings. Fried eggplant develops a crisp outside and buttery inside. What's more, with so many varieties to play with, there's no getting bored. Try some of the ones listed here—and in the recipes that follow—and who knows, you might just fall in love, too.

BASIC TYPES (AND A FEW OF MY FAVORITES)

Come late summer, eggplants in every shape, size, and color are abundant in grocery stores and farmers' markets. Here are some types you'll likely encounter, along with a few of my favorite varieties.

GLOBE

This is your everyday grocery store variety; the most common type of globe is called Black Beauty. It's deep purple, with a bulbous shape, and it's incredibly versatile: Slice and grill it or cut it into chunks and sauté, fry, or braise it. Its thick skin can turn leathery when cooked, so avoid this by peeling the entire fruit or by peeling it lengthwise in stripes to preserve some of its beautiful coloring.

ASIAN

Asian varieties can be long and slender or small and round; they range in color from white to lavender to near-black to green. Elongated varieties are more tender and delicately flavored than globe eggplants and have smaller seeds. For delicious stirfries, try Orient Charm; it can be lavender, pastel pink, or white. Mild-flavored Orient Express is thin, almost black, and great for quick cooking.

ITALIAN

For the most part, these have a shape similar to a globe but are smaller. They can be white, soft lavender, bright purple, mottled, or striped. My favorite is Clara; it's white, has creamy, nutty nuances, and is best grilled. Rosa Bianca has a teardrop shape and a mottled white and lavender peel; it's slightly sweet, with an almost fluffy texture, and it's great on the grill, too. I like bright purple Beatrice breaded and fried.

SMALL

Also called baby or Indian eggplants, these can be as tiny as a walnut or up to a few inches long. They cook quickly and, unlike other types of eggplant, rarely turn bitter, even with age. Use them for pickling or slice them in half and sauté. For braising, Hike Fairy Tale, which is sweet, tender, and marbled purple and white, and the oval-shaped Calliope, which has lavender and white stripes.





southeast asian grilled eggplant salad

This salad is a delicious way to show off the lovely slender shape of Asian eggplants, which readily absorb the ginger-soy dressing that's spooned over the top. Serves 4 to 6

- 14 cup peanut oil
- 1/4 cup fresh lime juice
- 3 Tbs. minced shallot
- 1 Tbs. fish sauce
- 1¾ tsp. granulated sugar
- 1 to 2 Thai bird chiles, minced, or 1½ to 2 serrano chiles, seeded, minced Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 2 Tbs. minced fresh ginger
- 1½ Tbs. soy sauce
- 1¼ lb. long, slender Asian eggplants, trimmed and halved lengthwise
- 4 oz. baby lettuces (about 5½ cups)
- 10 to 12 oz. cherry or grape tomatoes, halved (about 2 cups)
- 1 cup packed fresh basil leaves (preferably Thai basil)
- 1/3 cup packed fresh mint leaves

Prepare a medium-high gas or charcoal grill fire.

In a small bowl, whisk 3 Tbs. of the peanut oil with the lime juice, 2 Tbs. of the shallot, the fish sauce, ¾ tsp. of the sugar, and the chiles. Season to taste with salt and pepper. In another small bowl, combine 2 tsp. water with the ginger, soy sauce, the remaining 1 Tbs. shallot, and 1 tsp. sugar. Arrange the eggplant halves on a rimmed baking sheet, brush both sides with the remaining 1 Tbs. peanut oil, and sprinkle with salt and pepper. Grill the eggplant, covered, until tender, 3 to 5 minutes per side. Combine the lettuces, tomatoes, basil, and mint in a large bowl. Rewhisk the lime dressing and toss just enough into the salad to lightly coat the greens. Season the salad to taste with salt and pepper. Transfer the salad to a platter and arrange the eggplant over the salad. Spoon the ginger mixture over the eggplant, and serve immediately.



Get a bonus recipe for Grilled Arctic Char and Eggplant with Salsa Verde at FineCooking.com/extras.

The succulent texture and nutty flavor of grilled eggplant is complemented here by burrata, a rich cream-filled mozzarella that's a must-try. (See Test Kitchen, p. 87, for more information.) Serves 4

3 Tbs. extra-virgin olive oil; more

- 2 Tbs. minced fresh mint, plus small leaves for garnish
- 2 Tbs. minced shallot

for brushing

- 1 Tbs. balsamic vinegar
- 1/3 cup pitted Kalamata olives, finely chopped
- 2 Tbs. toasted walnuts, finely chopped
- 1 to 11/4 lb. globe eggplant (2 small or 1 slender large), peeled if you like, trimmed, and cut into 1/2-inch-thick rounds
- 4 1/2- to 3/4-inch-thick slices crusty, artisanstyle white bread
 - Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 1 oz. mixed baby greens
- 1 8-oz. package burrata (or fresh mozzarella), drained

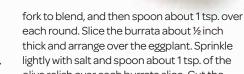
Prepare a medium-high gas or charcoal grill fire. In a small bowl, combine the oil, mint, shallot, and vinegar. In another small bowl, combine the olives and walnuts. Beat the vinaigrette with a fork to blend, and then mix 2 tsp. into the olive mixture.

Arrange the eggplant and bread on a rimmed baking sheet. Brush the eggplant on both sides with olive oil and sprinkle with salt and pepper. Brush the bread slices on one side with oil, and sprinkle with salt and pepper.

Grill the eggplant, covered, until tender, about 3 minutes per side. Transfer to a plate. Grill the bread, covered, until toasted, 1 to 2 minutes per side.

Arrange the grilled bread on a cutting board, oiled side up. Top each slice with some of the mixed greens. Arrange the eggplant rounds atop the greens. Beat the vinaigrette with a

each round. Slice the burrata about 1/2 inch thick and arrange over the eggplant. Sprinkle lightly with salt and spoon about 1 tsp. of the olive relish over each burrata slice. Cut the sandwiches in half and transfer to plates. Garnish with small mint leaves and serve.



EGGPLANT: FACT VS. FICTION

When it comes to eggplant, there's no shortage of old wives' tales and theories. Here are a few of the facts that every cook should know.

It's a fruit, not a vegetable. Although a member of the nightshade family (which also includes potatoes) and usually cooked like a vegetable, eggplant is actually a fruit-specifically, a berry.

There's no such thing as a male or female eggplant. Fruit is genderless, but you'll still hear eggplants referred to as "male" or "female." A common misconception is that the number of seeds in a plant correlates to its sex, with fewer seeds indicating a male and more indicating a female. In truth, seediness has more to do with age than anything else. Young eggplants have smaller, less noticeable seeds; mature eggplants have larger seeds. (See page 68 for tips on how to select the best eggplant.)

You don't always need to salt eggplant. Traditionally, eggplant was sprinkled with salt before cooking to lessen its bitter flavor.

Modern varieties are much less bitter than eggplants of yore, though, making salting less of a necessity. That said, salting before frying can make eggplant less oily. The salt pulls out moisture from the fruit and collapses the air pockets in its soft flesh, making it less apt to absorb lots of oil.

The dimple shape on the base of an eggplant doesn't mean much. Folklore has it that a round dimple on the base of an eggplant indicates that it has fewer seeds. An oval dimple is supposedly a sign that an eggplant has more seeds and less flesh. I haven't found dimple shape to reliably indicate seediness; instead, I focus on how firm and shiny an eggplant is before buying it.



lamb chops and eggplant with indian spices

To maximize flavor, whole cumin and coriander seeds are toasted and coarsely ground before they're used to season this rustic dish. Serves 4

- 1 Tbs. cumin seeds
- 2 tsp. coriander seeds
- 8 1- to 11/4-inch-thick lamb rib chops (or 4 shoulder arm chops)
- 6 Tbs. plus 2 tsp. olive oil
- 1 tsp. sweet paprika
- 1/2 tsp. plus 1/4 tsp. cayenne Kosher salt and freshly ground pepper
- 134 lb. globe eggplants (about 2 medium or 4 small), unpeeled, cut into 1-inch cubes
- 1 large red onion, finely chopped
- 2 cups chopped, peeled, seeded fresh tomatoes (about 1 lb.)
- 1 15-oz. can chickpeas, rinsed and drained
- 2 large shallots, thinly sliced
- 1 cup dry white wine Garam masala, for serving

Position a rack in the lower third of the oven and heat the oven to 350°F.

Heat a 6- to 8-inch skillet over medium heat. Add the cumin and coriander seeds and cook until fragrant, stirring frequently, about 30 seconds. Transfer to a mortar or spice mill and grind coarsely.

Pat the lamb chops dry. Brush on both sides with 2 tsp. of the olive oil, then sprinkle with 2 tsp. of the ground seeds, ½ tsp. of the paprika, and 1/2 tsp. cayenne. Season with salt and pepper. Set aside.

Put the eggplant in a large bowl. Toss with 5 Tbs. of the oil. Transfer the eggplant to a heavy-duty rimmed baking sheet and sprinkle with salt and pepper. Bake, turning once halfway through, until the eggplant is almost tender and starting to brown on the bottom, about 25 minutes. Set aside.

Heat the remaining 1 Tbs. oil in a 12-inch nonstick skillet over medium heat. Add the onion and cook, stirring, until tender, about 6 minutes. Stir in the remaining ground spices, ½ tsp. paprika, and ½ tsp. cayenne. Add the tomatoes, chickpeas, and eggplant. Stir to combine. Cover and simmer until the eggplant is very tender and the flavors meld, about 10 minutes.

Meanwhile, heat another 12-inch skillet over high heat until very hot. Add half of the lamb chops in a single layer and cook until brown, about 2 minutes on each side. Reduce the heat to medium and cook about 2 minutes longer for medium rare. Transfer the lamb to a warm platter and cover to keep warm. Repeat with the second batch of lamb chops.

Add the shallots to the skillet and cook, stirring, until starting to soften, about 2 minutes. Add the wine and boil until syrupy, scraping up any browned bits, about 3 minutes. Add the wine mixture to the eggplant mixture and simmer to blend, about 1 minute. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Divide the lamb among 4 warmed plates. Spoon the eggplant mixture alongside, sprinkling it with a pinch of garam masala, and serve immediately.

eggplant, scallop, and broccolini stir-fry

A cross between broccoli and Chinese kale, Broccolini has a sweet, slightly peppery flavor. Here, it provides a crisp-tender contrast to the eggplant and scallops. (If you can't find Broccolini, substitute small broccoli florets.) A ginger-chile sauce adds spicy heat. Serve over brown jasmine rice. Serves 4

- 1 8-oz. bottle clam juice
- 2 Tbs. lower-sodium soy sauce
- 1 Tbs. Asian sesame oil
- 1 Tbs. red wine vinegar
- 1 Tbs. cornstarch
- 1 tsp. granulated sugar
- tsp. Asian red chile sauce (such as sambal oelek or Sriracha)
 Freshly ground black pepper
- 31/2 Tbs. vegetable oil; more as needed

- 1 lb. long, slender Asian eggplants, trimmed and sliced ¾ inch thick on the diagonal
- 1 to 1¼ lb. all-natural dry-packed sea scallops, side muscles removed Kosher salt
- 4 scallions, thinly sliced
- 2 Tbs. minced fresh ginger
- 2 tsp. minced garlic
- 1 large bunch (about ½ lb.) Broccolini, cut into bite-size pieces

Combine the clam juice, soy sauce, sesame oil, vinegar, cornstarch, sugar, chile sauce, and ½ tsp. pepper in a glass measuring cup or medium bowl.

Heat 1½ Tbs. of the vegetable oil in a 12-inch nonstick skillet over medium-high heat. Working in batches, cook the eggplant in a single layer until almost tender and starting to brown, about 3 minutes per side. Transfer each

batch to a paper-towel-lined plate when done and add more oil between batches as needed. Heat 1½ Tbs. of the oil in the same skillet over medium-high heat until very hot. Lightly sprinkle the scallops with salt and pepper and cook until brown and almost cooked through, 2 to 3 minutes per side. Transfer to a plate. Add the remaining ½ Tbs. oil and the scallions, ginger, and garlic to the skillet; stir until fragrant, about 30 seconds. Add the Broccolini, sprinkle with salt, and stir until heated through, about 1 minute. Cover and cook until crisp-tender, stirring occasionally, 6 to 8 minutes. Stir the broth mixture to combine and add to the skillet. Bring to a simmer, stirring constantly. Add the eggplant and the scallops and simmer just until heated through, 2 to 3 minutes. Serve.

Kristine Kidd is the author of six cookbooks. Her most recent is Williams-Sonoma Weeknight Fresh + Fast. □



A Fresh Start

Bored with your breakfast routine? Here are some simple, fast ways to upgrade your morning meal. BY DABNEY GOUGH

OATMEAL, OMELETS, AND PANCAKES are breakfast classics, sure.
But first thing in the morning, these options can feel as tired as you do. Never fear:
The easy, unexpected breakfast recipes that follow are sure to wake up your taste buds, and they come together in a flash. It's going to be a delicious morning.

pumpkin seed, walnut, and blueberry muesli

Muesli is granola's healthier and less-time-consuming cousin; you can make a big batch in a couple of minutes and enjoy it for the rest of the week.

On separate baking sheets, toast 4 cups rolled oats, 1 cup chopped walnuts, and 1 cup pumpkin seeds in a 375°F oven until each is lightly golden, 5 to 10 minutes. Let cool, then combine with 2 cups dried blueberries. Serve with milk or plain yogurt and a drizzle of honey. Yields 8 cups; serves 8.



warm berries and nectarines with mascarpone

Fresh summer berries become a warm breakfast treat after a quick cook in a hot skillet. Mascarpone, an Italian-style cream cheese available in most grocery stores, is a simple creamy topping for the fruit. Or use Greek yogurt instead.

In a large skillet, combine 2 Tbs. granulated sugar, 1 tsp. ground ginger, and ½ cup water. Bring to a boil over medium-high heat. Add 4 cups ripe mixed berries and 3 medium ripe thinly sliced nectarines. Cook, stirring frequently, until the nectarines

just begin to soften and the juice released from the berries thickens slightly, 4 to 5 minutes. Let cool for a minute and then transfer to serving bowls and garnish with ¼ cup mascarpone. Serves 3 to 4.





tomato toast with olive oil

This simple yet utterly delicious dish, also known as pan con tomate, may well be Spain's national breakfast. Choose tomatoes that are ripe but still fairly firm; they stand up to grating better than very soft ones.

Halve crosswise and seed 6 medium firm-ripe tomatoes. Grate the cut sides on the large holes of a box grater. In a fine sieve, gently press on the tomato pulp with a spoon to remove excess liquid. In a bowl, mix the pulp with 2 Tbs. extra-virgin olive oil and 1 tsp. fine sea salt. Halve 1 baguette crosswise and then lengthwise. Broil cut side up until golden. Spread the tomato pulp over the bread, drizzle with a little oil, and serve. Serves 4.

toast with cheddar and chutney

Mango chutney and cheese are often paired in classic British tea sandwiches, and that delicious combination inspired this simple four-ingredient breakfast.

Broil 4 slices of nutty artisan bread on a baking sheet until golden on one side. Flip and spread the untoasted sides with 1/4 cup Major Grey's mango chutney. Top the chutney with a few thin slices of ripe pear and 1 cup grated extra-sharp Cheddar. Broil until the cheese is melted and bubbly. Serves 2 to 4.

fried egg pitas with arugula

The secret to this spin on a fried egg sandwich is the tapenade, a tangy, salty olive and caper spread. Look for it near the jarred olives in the supermarket, or make your own (see Test Kitchen, p. 87, for a recipe).

Halve 2 pitas and broil them until golden on one side only. In a 12-inch skillet, fry 4 large eggs seasoned with salt and pepper in 2 Tbs. olive oil over medium-high heat. Spread ¼ cup tapenade inside the pitas. Tuck 1 cup baby arugula and the eggs into the pitas. Drizzle a little oil into each pita and serve. Serves 2 to 4.



This quick and hearty meal is what Elvis would have eaten for breakfast if he had lived south of the border. It's a great way to use up leftover corn tortillas (see "Taco Night," p. 56), if you have any on hand. You can also use small flour tortillas, if you like.

banana "quesadillas"

Heat a small skillet over medium-high heat. Meanwhile, spread 1/3 cup natural peanut butter (preferably chunky) evenly over four 5-inch corn tortillas. Halve 1 large ripe banana crosswise, then slice lengthwise into thirds. Arrange the banana slices over half of the tortillas, sprinkle with a pinch of kosher salt, and top with the remaining tortillas, peanut butter side down. Press gently to help them stick together, and then brush both sides lightly with 2 tsp. grapeseed or canola oil. Cook the quesadillas one at a time, flipping once, until browned in spots, about 2 minutes per side. Cut each quesadilla into halves or quarters. Serve with a drizzle of pure maple syrup or honey. Serves 2.



broiled pineapple with lime sour cream and macadamias

This twist on broiled grapefruit comes together in no time, especially if you buy a pineapple that's already peeled and cored; they're often sold in the produce section of the grocery store.

Peel, core, and slice 1 large ripe pineapple into ½-inch-thick rings. Arrange the rings in a single layer on a rimmed baking sheet. Blot dry with paper towels and then sprinkle with 3 Tbs. granulated sugar. Broil until the sugar is melted and browned, about 5 minutes, rotating the baking sheet as necessary for even broiling. Meanwhile, mix 1/3 cup sour cream and 1 Tbs. fresh lime juice in a small bowl. Transfer the pineapple to serving plates, top with a dollop of the sour cream, and sprinkle with 1/3 cup chopped toasted macadamia nuts (preferably salted). Serves 2 to 3.

Dabney Gough is a food writer and recipe developer who lives in Honolulu. Her first book, Bi-Rite Market's Eat Good Food, will be published this fall.

ICE POPS

One simple method, endless variations. By FANY GERSON

EVERY TOWN IN MEXICO has at least one *paleteria*—ice pop store— and as a kid, I'd indulge in their fruity, refreshing *paletas* practically every week. These were definitely not your average ice pops; the flavors were incredible, combining a wide array of fruits, herbs, and spices. Once I grew up, I discovered that these delicious treats are easy to make at home; all it takes is a few fresh ingredients, some inexpensive molds, and some time to kill while the pops freeze.

The method is straightforward. First, boil some sugar and water to make a simple syrup. If you like, spice it up with your choice of flavoring, from familiar cinnamon or vanilla to unexpected chile or lemongrass (see page 74 for more ideas). Combine the syrup with your favorite puréed fruit, yogurt (if you want your ice pops creamy), and your choice of fruit stirins. Then pour the mixture into molds, add sticks, and freeze. The toughest part is sitting tight while the freezer works its magic—but trust me, these pops are worth the wait.

TIP

Make these in any shape you want—just look for molds that hold about % cup each. They're inexpensive and available at well-stocked kitchenware stores. For a mail-order source, see page 95.

Three of Fany's favorites ice pops are, clockwise from top, Kiwi-Strawberry, Papaya-Tangerine, and Strawberry-Cherry. See page 77 for more.

ICE POPS

At its most basic, an ice pop consists of a simple syrup (see below) combined with a fruit purée, which is then frozen. Once you understand the technique, you can customize your pops by mixing and matching fruits and flavorings.

STEP 1

CHOOSE YOUR INGREDIENTS

Read the method from start to finish and then choose and prep your ingredients.

Yields about ten 1/2-cup pops



To create your own ice pops using our interactive Recipe Maker, visit FineCooking.com/extras.

STEP 2

MAKE THE SYRUP

A simple syrup is easy to make: Just combine sugar and water and boil. If you like, add a flavoring (below) to the syrup to infuse it with another layer of flavor. A pinch of salt helps bring out the flavor of the fruit purée you'll add later.

½ cup granulated sugar Pinch of kosher salt Flavoring (optional) Combine the sugar, salt, and ½ cup water in a 2-quart saucepan over medium heat. Bring to a boil and make sure the sugar has dissolved; add your choice of flavoring (if using). Reduce the heat to medium low and simmer for 2 minutes. Remove from the heat and let the syrup cool completely. Strain through a fine strainer into a 1-quart liquid measuring cup.

Flavorings (optional)







STEP 3

MAKE A FRUIT PURÉE **OR JUICE**

Purée the fruit in batches in a blender, or squeeze the juice; you'll need 2 cups.

Fruit or Juice



You can replace half of the purée or juice with 1 cup Greek yogurt to make creamy yogurt pops.



STEP 4

PREPARE THE STIR-INS

Stir-ins not only add extra flavor but also give an interesting textural element to the pops.

Stir-Ins (optional)



STEP 5

MAKE THE **ICE POPS**

Combine the 2 cups fruit purée or juice and the reserved syrup. Distribute your choice of stir-in(s) (if using) among ten 1/3-cup pop molds. Add the fruit mixture to each mold, leaving about 1/4 inch at the top to allow for expansion. Stir gently with a Popsicle stick to distribute the stir-ins. Freeze until partially frozen, about 1 hour. Insert sticks and freeze again until the pops are fully set, 4 to 6 hours more.

To unmold, dip the mold in a deep pan of hot water until the pops pull out easily, 30 to 40 seconds, or let sit at room temperature for 5 to 10 minutes. Unmold and store the pops in individual resealable plastic bags; they're best eaten within 3 weeks.

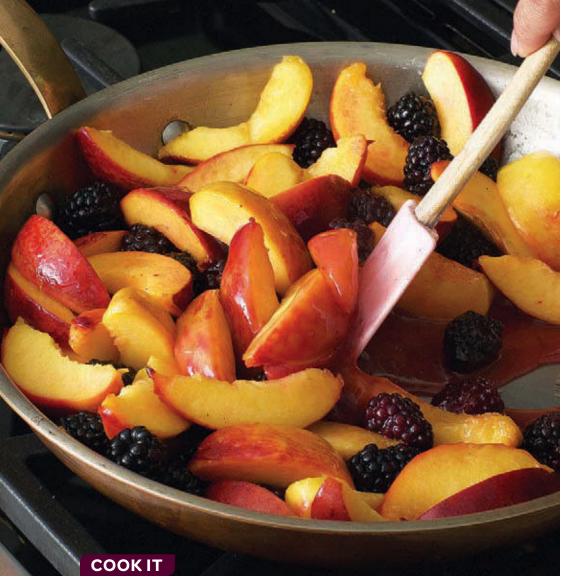
Fany Gerson is the proprietor of La Newyorkina, an ice pop shop on New York City's Lower East Side. She is the author of two cookbooks, My Sweet Mexico and Paletas.





If you have any pop mixture left over, freeze it in an ice cube tray and use the flavored cubes in drinks.









Leave space for the fruit to peek through when arranging the topping. This looks nice and gives the topping room to expand as it bakes.

Skillet Cobblers

Fresh fruit, a sweet topping, and a skillet are all you need to make these easier-than-pie summer desserts. BY ABIGAIL JOHNSON DODGE

ASKING ME TO PICK A FAVORITE DESSERT is like asking me to pick my favorite child—I just can't do it. I love all my desserts equally. But if you ask me something a little less general—like what my favorite *summer* dessert is—now that's a question I can answer. It's always a skillet cobbler.

These rustic family-style desserts of cooked fruit and buttery pastry topping can go by a host of colorful names, from cobbler to pandowdy to grunt, depending on what type of topping they have (see The Topping Defines the Dessert on page 85). But if it's a fresh fruit filling with a top crust of any kind, then it's all just a cobbler to me.





Look for juicy, bubbling fruit and a goldenbrown topping to tell you when the cobbler is done.

My skillet cobblers have three essential components: fresh fruit, a topping, and a super-simple cooking technique. Instead of a baking dish, I use a skillet so I can begin cooking the fruit on the stovetop. This way, when I add the topping, the hot filling starts to set the underside of the topping so there's no unpleasant raw layer just above the filling. Then I finish baking the assembled cobbler in the oven. This approach shortens the baking time a little and guarantees perfectly cooked cobblers every time.

For the filling, I like to pair fresh, ripe, seasonal fruit with flavorings that enhance its natural goodness without overpowering it (think spices, fresh citrus zest, and even spirits, like rum). The topping (be it a dumpling, a biscuit, or even shortbread) adds texture and even more flavor to the finished dessert.

Here are four fabulous skillet cobblers for you to try, each one as easy to make as it is delicious. Just please don't make me pick a favorite.

blackberry-peach cobbler with buttermilk biscuits

The secret to this cobbler's bright flavor is fresh orange juice in the filling and orange-scented sugar on the biscuit topping. Use a light hand when mixing the biscuit dough, or the topping will be tough. **Serves 6 to 8**

FOR THE TOPPING

- 2 Tbs. turbinado (raw) sugar
- 2 tsp. finely grated orange zest
- 41/2 oz. (1 cup) unbleached all-purpose flour
- ⅓ cup granulated sugar
- 2 tsp. baking powder
- ½ tsp. table salt
- 2½ oz. (5 Tbs.) cold unsalted butter, cut into 5 pieces
- 1/3 cup finely ground cornmeal
- ½ cup buttermilk
- 1 tsp. pure vanilla extract

FOR THE FILLING

- 1 oz. (2 Tbs.) unsalted butter
- ½ cup granulated sugar
- 1 Tbs. cornstarch
- ½ tsp. ground cardamom Pinch table salt
- 1/4 cup fresh orange juice
- 2 lb. ripe peaches, halved, pitted, and cut into 1-inch-thick slices
- 2 cups blackberries

Position a rack in the center of the oven and heat the oven to 375°F.

MAKE THE TOPPING

In a small ramekin, mix the turbinado sugar and the orange zest until blended and set aside.

In a food processor, combine the flour, sugar, baking powder, and salt. Pulse briefly to blend, about 10 seconds. Add the butter pieces and pulse until they are the size of small peas, 8 to 10 one-second pulses.

Transfer the mixture to a medium bowl. Stir in the cornmeal with a spatula. Gently stir in the buttermilk and vanilla until the dough is evenly moistened and begins to form large, soft clumps; don't overmix or the biscuits will be tough. Refrigerate.

MAKE THE FILLING

Melt the butter in a 10-inch nonreactive, ovenproof skillet (8- to 10-cup capacity) over



medium-low heat. Add the sugar, cornstarch, cardamom, and salt and cook, stirring, until the sugar begins to melt, about 2 minutes. Whisking constantly, add the orange juice and bring to a boil.

Add the peaches and cook, stirring gently, until just barely tender, about 3 minutes. Add the blackberries and gently toss until the berries are hot, about 1 minute. Remove from the heat.

ASSEMBLE AND BAKE

Spread the fruit into a relatively even layer.

drop the topping in about 8 mounds onto the filling, leaving space between them. With your fingers, distribute the orange-sugar evenly over the biscuits.

Bake until the filling is bubbling and a toothpick inserted in a biscuit comes out clean, 25 to 30 minutes. Let sit for about 5 minutes to allow the filling to settle and thicken before serving.

Find a bonus recipe for Apple-Pear

TOPPING TIP

Stirring the cornmeal in by hand (rather than using a food processor) preserves its nubby, crunchy texture.





pluot-blueberry cobbler with coconut dumplings

The pluot—a cross between a plum and an apricot—is a perfect flavor partner for the ripe summer blueberries in this dumpling-topped cobbler. A dash of dark rum adds yet another layer of flavor to the filling; it's optional but highly recommended. Serves 6 to 8

FOR THE TOPPING

- 1 13.5- to 14-oz, can coconut milk
- 9 oz. (2 cups) unbleached all-purpose flour
- 1/2 cup granulated sugar
- 11/2 tsp. baking powder
- 1/2 tsp. table salt
- 1 large egg
- 1 large egg yolk
- 4 oz. (1/2 cup) unsalted butter, melted and cooled slightly
- 1/4 cup toasted, shredded sweetened coconut

FOR THE FILLING

- 21/4 lb. ripe pluots, halved and pitted, each half cut into 3 wedges
- 34 cup granulated sugar
- 21/2 Tbs. cornstarch
- 1/4 tsp. table salt
- 1 oz. (2 Tbs.) unsalted butter
- 2 cups blueberries
- Tbs. dark rum (optional)

Position a rack in the center of the oven and heat the oven to 375°F.

MAKE THE TOPPING

In a large saucepan, boil the coconut milk over medium heat, stirring occasionally, until reduced to ¾ cup, about 15 minutes. Set aside to cool completely.

In a large bowl, whisk the flour, sugar, baking powder, and salt until well blended.

In a medium bowl, whisk the reduced coconut milk, egg, and yolk until well blended. Add the coconut mixture and the melted butter to the flour mixture; gently fold together with a spatula. Refrigerate.

MAKE THE FILLING

In a large bowl, toss the pluots, sugar, cornstarch, and salt with a spatula.

In a 10-inch nonreactive, ovenproof skillet (8- to 10-cup capacity), melt the butter over medium-low heat. Add the pluot mixture, scraping the bowl clean. Cook, stirring, until

the fruit begins to give off some juice and the liquid is boiling, about 3 minutes. Add the blueberries and rum (if using). Gently toss until the berries are hot, about 1 minute. Remove from the heat.

ASSEMBLE AND BAKE

Spread the fruit into a relatively even layer. Using a 2-tablespoon scoop (or two tablespoons), drop the topping randomly onto the filling. The topping will almost cover the fruit. Bake until the filling is bubbling and the topping is golden-brown, 40 to 50 minutes. Sprinkle with the toasted coconut and let sit for at least 30 minutes to allow the filling to settle and thicken before serving.

TOPPING TIP

Don't sprinkle the toasted, shredded coconut over the dumplings until they're done baking, or it will burn.

plum cobbler with honey and lavender biscuits

The tender biscuits that top this cobbler come together in a food processor in minutes. Use a mild honey in the filling so it doesn't overpower the plums. Serves 6 to 8

FOR THE TOPPING

- 6 oz. (11/3 cups) unbleached all-purpose flour
- 1/3 cup granulated sugar
- 1¾ tsp. baking powder
- 1/4 tsp. table salt
- 3 oz. (6 Tbs.) cold unsalted butter, cut into 5 pieces
- 1 tsp. chopped dried lavender
- 1/2 tsp. finely grated lemon zest
- 7 Tbs. heavy cream

FOR THE FILLING

- 3/3 cup mild honey (such as clover)
- 1 tsp. chopped dried lavender
- 2½ lb. ripe plums (about 12), halved and pitted, each half cut into 3 wedges
- 1 Tbs. cornstarch Pinch table salt

MAKE THE TOPPING

In a food processor, combine the flour, sugar, baking powder, and salt. Pulse briefly to blend. Add the cold butter and pulse into ½-inch pieces, 5 to 7 pulses. Add the lavender and lemon zest and pulse briefly to combine. Pour the cream over the top and pulse just until moist crumbs form, 8 to 10 pulses.

Turn the mixture out onto a work surface and gently knead until the dough comes together. Lightly flour the dough and roll it into a 9x5-inch rectangle. Cut the rectangle in half lengthwise, and cut each half into four equal pieces. Wrap in plastic and refrigerate. (The dough may be made up to 6 hours ahead.)

MAKE THE FILLING

Put the honey and lavender in a 10-inch nonreactive, ovenproof skillet (8- to 10-cup capacity). Bring to a boil over medium-low heat. In a large bowl, toss the plums with the cornstarch and salt until evenly coated. Add to the boiling honey mixture and cook, stirring gently, until the plums release some juice and the sauce has thickened, about 6 minutes. Remove from the heat.

ASSEMBLE AND BAKE

Spread the fruit into a relatively even layer. Arrange the dough pieces on top of the fruit, leaving spaces between them. Bake until the filling is bubbling and the topping is nicely browned, 30 to 40 minutes. Let sit for about 15 minutes to allow the filling to settle and thicken before serving.

TOPPING TIP

Use dried edible organic lavender to make this biscuit topping (not the lavender used to make scented sachets). It can be found at Whole Foods, natural food stores, and specialty markets.





vanilla-fig cobbler with spiced shortbread topping

Toasted hazelnuts and warm spices give the cookie-like topping on this cobbler a deep, rich flavor that's reminiscent of linzer cookies. Serves 6 to 8

FOR THE TOPPING

- 5% oz. (1% cups) unbleached all-purpose flour
 - 2 oz. (1/2 cup) finely ground toasted hazelnuts
- 1/2 tsp. baking powder
- 14 tsp. ground cinnamon
- 1/4 tsp. ground ginger
- 1/4 tsp. table salt
- 1/8 tsp. ground nutmeg Pinch of ground cloves Pinch of ground white pepper (optional)

- 4 oz. (1/2 cup) unsalted butter, softened
- 1/2 cup firmly packed light brown sugar
- 3 large egg yolks
- 1 tsp. pure vanilla extract

FOR THE FILLING

- 1/2 cup granulated sugar
- 2 tsp. unbleached all-purpose flour
- 1/4 tsp. table salt
- 2 oz. (4 Tbs.) unsalted butter, cut into
- 2 Tbs. fresh lemon juice
- 1 tsp. finely grated lemon zest

- 1 vanilla bean (about 5 inches long), halved lengthwise, seeds scraped out (see Test Kitchen, p. 87)
- 2 lb. firm-ripe fresh figs, trimmed and halved (or quartered if large)

MAKE THE TOPPING

In a medium bowl, combine the flour, hazelnuts, baking powder, cinnamon, ginger, salt, nutmeg (freshly ground is best), cloves, and white pepper (if using). Whisk until well blended. In a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, beat the butter and sugar on medium-high speed until light, 3 to 5 minutes. Add the egg yolks and vanilla and beat until well blended, about 1 minute. Add the flour mixture and mix on medium-low speed until well blended, about 1 minute.





Lay a large piece of plastic wrap on the counter. Scrape the dough onto the plastic. Using the plastic as an aid, shape the dough into a 7½-inch-long log. Wrap in the plastic and refrigerate until firm, about 4 hours (or up to 2 days.)

Cut the chilled dough into ten %-inch-thick slices, wrap, and refrigerate until ready to bake the cobbler.

MAKE THE FILLING

Position a rack in the center of the oven and heat the oven to 375°F.

Put the sugar, flour, and salt in a 10-inch nonreactive, ovenproof skillet (8- to 10-cup capacity) and whisk until well blended. Add 1 cup water and the butter, lemon juice, lemon zest, and vanilla bean halves and seeds. Cook over medium-low heat, stirring occasionally, until the butter melts and the sugar dissolves, about 2 minutes. Increase the heat to medium and boil, whisking constantly, until thickened, about 1 minute. Cover and set aside off the heat to steep for at least 30 minutes and up to 2 hours.

Return the syrup to a boil over medium-low heat. Add the figs and cook, tossing gently, until very hot and beginning to release their juice, 3 to 5 minutes. Remove from the heat.

ASSEMBLE AND BAKE

Spread the fruit into a relatively even layer. Arrange the topping slices randomly over the hot filling, leaving space between them.

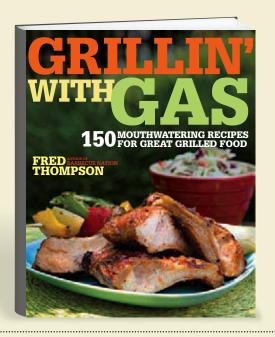
TOPPING TIP

The oil in hazelnuts can become rancid quickly, so smell and taste the nuts you're using before toasting them to be sure they're fresh.

Bake until the filling is bubbling and the topping is golden-brown (a toothpick inserted into a few pieces should come out clean), 25 to 35 minutes. Let sit about for 30 minutes to allow the filling to settle and thicken before serving.

Abigail Johnson Dodge is a Fine Cooking contributing editor. □

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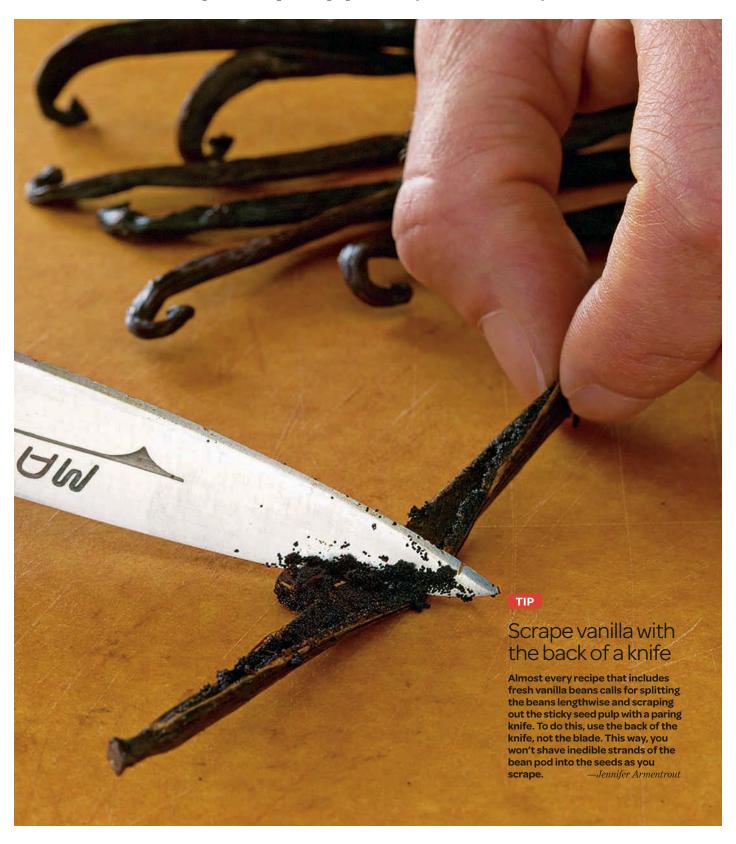
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TEST KITCHEN

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Burrata: mozzarella with a creamy center

BURRATA (boor-RAH-tah), a fresh mozzarella-like cheese from the Italian region of Puglia, is prized for its two textures (a soft, elastic, spongy outer layer wrapped around a creamy, oozy interior) and its rich milky flavor. Some say burrata (derived from burro, butter in Italian) was first created as a means to use up leftover scraps of mozzarella cheese. The cheese makers would add cream to the scraps and wrap them in a pouch made from a larger piece of mozzarella. As with regular mozzarella, burrata was originally made with water buffalo milk but is now more typically made with cow's milk.

Best sliced with a serrated knife, burrata is delicious paired with crusty bread and flavorful ingredients like prosciutto, tomatoes, olives, nuts, and herbs. In this issue, you'll find it lending its creamy richness to the Tomatoes and Burrata with Tapenade on page 49 and the Open-Face Grilled Eggplant Sandwiches with Olive-Walnut Relish on page 67.

Look for burrata in well-stocked groceries, gourmet markets, and cheese shops (or see page 95 for a mail-order source). Highly perishable, burrata should be eaten within 24 hours of purchase and is considered past its prime after about 48 hours. -Julissa Roberts





INGREDIENT

A homemade substitute for za'atar

The Middle-Eastern spice blend called za'atar is an important ingredient in the Tomato, Chickpea, and Feta Salad on page 46. There are many styles of za'atar (any of which will work in this recipe), but all share the common ingredients of sesame seeds, ground sumac, and dried za'atar (an herb with a savory-thymeoregano flavor). You can buy za'atar blends in Middle-Eastern markets (see page 95 for a mail-order source), but you can also make it at home. In the blend shown above, thyme and oregano or marjoram stand in for the za'atar herb, which is rarely available in the United States.

To make about 1/3 cup of za'atar, put 3 Tbs. dried thyme, 1 Tbs. lightly toasted sesame seeds, 1 Tbs. ground sumac*, 1/2 tsp. dried oregano or marjoram, and 1/4 tsp. kosher salt in a spice grinder. Pulse a few times to mix and break up some of the seedsthere should still be many whole seeds visible. Store in a cool, dark place for up to six months.

*If unavailable, substitute 2 Tbs. dried lemon peel.



TECHNIQUE

Three ways to char a chile

THE EASIEST WAY TO PEEL A FRESH HOT CHILE OR Sweet bell pepper is to char it first. Charring, or fire-roasting, blackens and loosens the skin from the chile's flesh, allowing it to peel away effortlessly.

It also softens the chile and imparts a slightly smoky flavor. Below are three ways to do it. Grilling and broiling are ideal for bigger batches, while the stovetop method works best for just a few.



On the grill Lightly coat chiles with oil and place on the grate over a medium-hot to hot direct grill fire. Turn with tongs as needed until the chile is blackened on all sides.



Under the broiler Put unoiled chiles on a baking sheet or broiler pan and broil 4 to 6 inches from a hot broiler, turning with tongs as needed, until blackened on all sides.



Over a stove burner Balance unoiled bell peppers on a stove grate directly over a high gas flame, turning with tongs as needed, until blackened on all sides. If using an electric stove or for small chiles, see below.

For all methods Once the chiles are charred, immediately put them in a heatproof bowl, cover tightly with plastic wrap, and let sit until cool enough to handle. The chiles will steam as they cool, further

loosening the skins. When the chiles are cool, scrape the skins off with your fingers or a paring knife and then core and seed the chiles.

—J. A

EQUIPMENT

A chile roaster for electric stoves

Charring chiles directly over a stovetop burner is quick and convenient, but it doesn't work well on electric stoves—direct contact with an electric burner tends to singe rather than char. This little stovetop roaster, which fits right over a burner, eliminates that problem by essentially turning the burner into a grill. It's also good for gas stoves when charring small chiles, which are hard to balance on the cooking grate. For a mailorder source, see page 95. -J.A.





Tapenade is a salty, assertive condiment from the South of France. Its main ingredients are olives, capers, anchovies, olive oil, and lemon juice; additional flavorings, such as tuna, thyme, bay leaf, and brandy, vary by region. The word tapenade derives from tapéno, the Provençal word for caper, which used to be the main ingredient. These days, olives predominate.

Tapenade is usually spread on toasted bread as an appetizer, but it's also a good topping for grilled meats, chicken, and fish. In this issue, you'll find it in Tomatoes and Burrata with Tapenade on page 49 and Fried Egg Pitas with Arugula on page 71. Look for tapenade at the grocery store, or make your own using the recipe at right. —J. R.

tapenade

Any type of olive can be used to make tapenade, but brinecured black olives are the usual choice. For an especially robust tapenade, try a combination of half oil-cured and half brine-cured black olives. Yields about 1 cup

- 1/2 lb. (11/2 cups) pitted black or green olives (such as Kalamata, Niçoise, or green Sicilian), rinsed and drained
- 2 Tbs. capers, rinsed and
- 3 anchovy fillets, rinsed and patted dry
- 1 medium clove garlic, smashed and peeled
- 1 tsp. Dijon mustard
- 11/2 Tbs. fresh lemon juice
- 1 Tbs. extra-virgin olive oil

1 Tbs. finely chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley Freshly ground black pepper

Put the olives, capers, anchovies, garlic, and mustard in a food processor and pulse until smooth. With the motor running, add the lemon juice and oil. Transfer to a bowl and stir in the parsley and ¼ tsp. pepper. Refrigerate in an airtight container for up to 1 month.

EQUIPMENT

Double your grill space with a rib rack

When it comes to grilling ribs, often the biggest challenge is how to fit the racks on the grill. Ribs need to cook over indirect heat (see page 36), so the section of the grate that's over direct heat is out of bounds. On smaller grills, this means that fitting even two racks can be tricky.

Enter the rib rack (the tool, not the meat). This low-tech gadget, which looks like a file folder organizer, holds the racks in a vertical position, allowing you to cook as many as four racks in the same space as two lying flat. For a mail-order source, see page 95.





TIP

Store tomatoes at room temperature

Fresh vine-ripened tomatoes are one of the summer's chief pleasures. To keep them tasting their best, don't refrigerate them unless they're about to spoil. Refrigeration shuts down flavor-producing enzyme activity and causes a mealy texture. (Refrigerated tomatoes can recover some of their flavor enzyme activity if left at room temperature for a day or two before using.)

To store a cut tomato, cover the cut side with plastic wrap, pulling it taut over the cut side and wrapping it loosely around the uncut sides of the tomato. Put the tomato cut side down on a small plate; it'll keep at room temperature for up to two days. -J.A.





EQUIPMENT

Two ways to measure propane

THERE'S NOTHING MORE ANNOYING than running out of propane in the middle of a barbecue, so before you fire up your gas grill, check the fuel level in the propane tank. If your grill doesn't have a built-in fuel gauge, here are two other ways to check:

THE HOT WATER METHOD

Disconnect the tank from the grill and stand it upright. Pour a quart of hot tap water down one side-the propane inside the tank will quickly absorb the heat, leaving the tank cold below the fuel and warm above it. Slide your hand down the side of the tank where you poured the water, feeling the temperature. The point at which the tank becomes cold marks the level of the propane. Knowing that a completely full 20-pound tank (which holds about 4.7 gallons of propane) lasts about 20 hours, you can now estimate how much cooking time remains.

THE SCALE METHOD

Disconnect the tank from the grill and set it upright on a bathroom scale. Subtract 18 pounds (the weight of the tank); the difference is the weight of the propane remaining in the tank. Each pound of propane equals about one hour of cooking time.

—J. R.

Note: Cooking times are averages and will vary depending on the BTU output of your grill.

GLOSSARY

Rouille is a classic Provençal sauce

THE THICK, GARLICKY SAUCE called rouille (roo-EE) is often used in French Provençal cooking to flavor fish dishes, especially bouillabaisse (like the one on page 52). French for "rust," rouille is sometimes reddish in color. Besides plenty of fresh garlic, the traditional rouille flavor profile includes olive oil, and chile for a spicy kick. Saffron is a common add-in, and in France, you may find rouille made with fish livers or sea urchin.

There are two schools of thought on how rouille should be made. Some cooks like their rouille to be a silky mayonnaise made with egg yolks and oil (similar to aïoli), while others go for a rustic, bread-thickened sauce without egg. Our version uses what's already on hand from making the bouillabaisse—breadcrumbs left over from making the croutons, some cooked potato for body, fish broth, garlic, extra-virgin olive oil, and cayenne.

If you have any rouille left after enjoying the bouillabaisse, try it with grilled fish or poached shrimp or mussels. It'll keep in the refrigerator for two or three days.

-Denise Mickelsen



Ice Cream Makers

Our favorite models churn out creamy, smooth results that put store-bought ice cream to shame. BY GARTH CLINGINGSMITH

ICE CREAM MAKERS HAVE COME A LONG WAY since those loud, leaky buckets you may have hand-cranked on your grandmother's porch. They needed a barrel of ice, multiple scoops of rock salt, and many-a-cousins' elbow grease to produce tasty results. Traditional models like those still exist (and may have their charms), but we prefer the ease and convenience of modern electric canister and freezer models that do the churning for you.

They're well worth the investment, though both types have their advantages and disadvantages, depending on the amount of space, time, and money you have. We tested 12 models to determine our favorites and found that the two here were a cut above the rest.

HERE'S HOW THEY WORK

Although designed differently, canister and freezer ice cream makers work essentially the same way. You turn on the machine and then pour in a homemade base (usually made from cream, milk, sugar, eggs, and a flavoring for ice cream or sweetened fruit juice or purée for sorbet). A churning blade (called a dasher) slowly mixes the base as the cold bowl inside the machine freezes it to a smooth, soft-serve consistency.



To create your own recipe for ice cream using our interactive Recipe Maker, visit FineCooking.com/extras.





Canister Ice Cream Makers

These come with a liquid-coolant-lined bowl that must be frozen before making ice cream; freezing the bowl can take anywhere from 4 to 12 hours. Canister ice cream makers are fairly inexpensive and generally churn ice cream faster than any other machines on the market; the ones we tested all produced soft-serve results in no more than 20 minutes. A 1½-quart model (the average size we tried) has a bowl that's about 5 inches high and 7 inches wide. If you have the freezer space to accommodate a bowl this big, as well as the patience to wait for it to freeze, a canister machine is a relatively low-cost, easy way to make delicious ice cream and sorbet.

FAVORITE CANISTER MODEL

Cuisinart Pure Indulgence, ICE-30BC, \$79.95, cuisinart.com

This was the fastest canister model we tested: Its bowl was frozen and ready to go in just four hours, and it churned rich, smooth ice cream in only 12 minutes (sorbet took 21). The churning blade did a nice job scraping the sides of the bowl; in other models, this wasn't the case, and ice cream froze solid on the sides. This 2-quart machine has an 8½-inch-square footprint and a bowl that's about 1 inch larger than those of other models we

tested (though it doesn't noticeably take up more freezer space). This machine is easy to assemble, has a see-through top, and the widest opening (3 inches) of any model in its category, which makes adding ingredients (and sneaking a taste) easy. It has a basic churning blade, a simple on-off dial, and a sleek, rounded metal base that's a cinch to clean. What's more, it's super quiet. It comes with a threeyear warranty.



Countertop Freezer Ice Cream Makers

These models have an integrated freezer, so you don't have to start with a frozen bowl. Turn on the machine, add your base, and you'll have creamy ice cream in about a half-hour. That convenience comes at a price, though—anywhere from \$279 to more than \$700. For those with a sweet tooth, the high cost will be worth it. Without a bowl that needs hours of freezer time, these models can run continuously, making batch after batch. True, they can be bulky and, in some cases, quite heavy, but there's no better option for making ice cream on a whim.

FAVORITE FREEZER MODEL

Whynter, ICM-15LS, \$279, homedepot.com

This freezer model offers the most bang for your buck. Not only was it the cheapest freezer model we tested, but it also had some of the fastest churning times, producing ice cream in 30 minutes and sorbet in a mere 24. The 1.6-quart machine is large (it has a 15x10-inch base) and weighs 22 pounds, but that's nothing when compared with a 37-pound pricier model. Its digital display keeps track of time remaining (which is helpful) and the temperature inside the freezer (though unnecessary, it's still fun to monitor). The portal on the lid is

small, but if you remove the entire lid to pour in the ice cream base and add mix-ins (the motor continues to run), the machine has a generous 5-inch opening. Ice cream and sorbet came out luxuriously smooth, with a stiff soft-serve consistency. The machine has an uncomplicated churning blade, a smooth, stainless-steel and sturdy plastic exterior, and an interior bowl that can be removed for easy cleaning. When in use, it emits a low hum that's easy to ignore. It has a one-year warranty.

WHAT TO CONSIDER

Footprint If you're thinking about buying a canister model, make sure you have room in the freezer for the bowl. If opting for a freezer model, allow for plenty of countertop and storage space.

Generous openings A wide opening makes pouring in the ice cream base, adding mix-ins, and stealing a quick taste that much easier. Look for an ice cream maker with an opening of at least 3 inches.

Yield A pint-size maker is great for two people; a 1.5- to 2-quart machine is perfect for a small family. If you plan to make ice cream for large crowds, opt for a 4-quart model.

Simplicity The simplest models are often the easiest to use and clean. Look for models with a basic on-off switch, a simply designed churning blade, and a smooth exterior.

HOW WE TESTED

We tested 12 electric ice cream makers by making lemon sorbet, vanilla ice cream, and ice cream with chopped Skor candy bars. For each machine, we noted assembly and prep time, churning time, ease of use and cleanup, and the taste and texture of the final product.

Garth Clingingsmith is an equipment tester who lives in Glendive. Montana.



Recipes	Calories (kcal)	Fat Cal (kcal)	Protein (g)	Carb (g)	Total Fat (g)	Sat Fat (g)	Mono Fat (g)	Poly Fat (g)	Chol (mg)	Sodium (mg)	Fiber (g)
OKRA, P. 11	(KCai)	(KCal)	(8)	(8)	141(8)	(8)	Tat (g)	rac(g)	לאווא	(Sill)	(8)
Grilled Okra with Smoked Paprika-Shallot Dip	160	130	2	7	14	3	5	5	10	350	3
HOT CHILES, P. 16		.00	_	,						000	
Louisiana-Style Hot Sauce (per 1 tsp.)	5	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
LIMES, P. 18											
Lime Curd (per 2 Tbs.)	100	60	1	11	6	3.5	2	0	85	20	0
Cube Steak with Lime Mojo	230	90	27	6	10	2.5	4.5	1.5	60	200	1
Vietnamese-Style Rice Noodle Salad	200	45	5	36	5	0.5	2.5	1.5	0	530	3
MAKE IT TONIGHT, P. 20											
Sourdough Panzanella with Grilled Chicken	700	290	39	62	33	5	21	4.5	70	1110	5
Smoky Grilled Meatball Subs	500	220	34	40	24	8	11	2.5	135	930	2
Grilled Cheese with Prosciutto and Tomatoes	380	200	20	23	23	13	7	1.5	80	1140	2
Orzo with Brown Butter and Parmesan	250	70	9	33	8	4.5	2	0	15	210	1
Blackberry Fool	290	200	2	21	23	14	6	1	80	105	3
New York Steaks with Martini Butter	550	310	50	1	35	13	16	2.5	165	470	0
FRENCH FRIES, P. 28											
French Fries	430	250	5	41	28	2	18	8	0	290	3
LA GRANDE SEDUCTION, P. 30											
Steak au Poivre	670	390	46	6	44	22	16	2	205	390	1
GOOD LIFE, P. 34											
Gluten-Free Buttermilk Pancakes	100	40	3	12	4	0.5	1	0.5	30	200	1
GRILLING GREATS, P. 36											
Bacon Burgers with Bacon-Onion-Balsamic Jam	630	330	44	29	37	13	16	3.5	135	1310	2
Bourbon-and-Vanilla-Brined Pork Chops	350	180	36	4	20	7	8	3.5	100	730	1
Five-Spice Chicken with Hoisin-Maple Glaze	440	220	35	20	24	6	10	7	105	1050	1
Margarita-Glazed Baby Back Ribs	620	210	41	35	24	6	13	2.5	100	1620	1
Rib-Eye Steaks Rubbed with Coffee and Cocoa	360	170	43	2	19	8	8	0.5	100	630	1
TOMATOES IN TEN, P. 44											
Grilled Tomatoes with Saba and Sea Salt	40	15	1	6	2	0	1.5	0	0	300	1
Gratinéed Tomatoes with Asiago and Fresh Herbs	45	25	2	4	3	1	1.5	0	5	70	1
Peach, Pancetta, Lettuce, and Tomato Sandwiches	400	150	18	44	17	5	7	3	40	1050	3
Tomato-Ginger Dressing (per 2 Tbs.)	35	30	0	1	3.5	0	2.5	0	0	35	0
Baked Provolone with Tomatoes and Marjoram	310	220	20	3	24	14	8	1	55	750	0
Tomatoes and Burrata with Tapenade	220	150	11	3	17	8	2	0	40	360	1
Tomato "Caponata" (per ¼ cup)	35	25	1	3	2.5	0	1.5	0.5	0	170	1
No-Cook Tomato Sauce (per 1 cup)	120	70	3	13	7	1	5	1	0	160	4
Tomato, Chickpea, and Feta Salad	230	110	9	23	12	3.5	6	1.5	15	360	6
Tomato and Grilled Zucchini Stacks	100	60	5	6	7	3	3	0.5	15	170	1
BOUILLABAISSE, P. 50											
Bouillabaisse	660	180	54	59	20	3.5	12	3	105	1200	3
TACO NIGHT, P. 56											
Fresh Corn Tortillas	90	10	2	20	1	0	0	0.5	0	35	2
Shredded Brisket with Chipotle Dressing	420	260	34	3	30	10	15	1.5	5	650	1
Grilled Tamarind Chicken	60	30	7	1	3	1	1	0.5	25	105	0
Tex-Mex Grilled Shrimp	100	35	14	2	3.5	0	2	0	120	1040	0
EGGPLANT, P. 64											
Southeast Asian Grilled Eggplant Salad	120	70	3	12	8	1.5	3.5	2.5	0	650	5
Grilled Eggplant Sandwiches with Olive-Walnut Relish	380	210	15	28	23	9	10	2	45	440	6
Eggplant, Scallop, and Broccolini Stir-Fry	290	140	18	21	17	2	7	7	30	1180	5
Lamb Chops and Eggplant with Indian Spices	710	310	41	51	35	7	21	4.5	85	590	17
BREAKFAST, P. 70											
Warm Berries and Nectarines with Mascarpone	250	130	4	36	14	7	3.5	0	35	15	6
Peanut Butter and Banana "Quesadillas"	510	250	12	53	28	5	12	10	0	270	6
Broiled Pineapple with Sour Cream and Macadamias	350	140	3	55	16	4.5	10	0.5	10	60	5

Recipes	Calories (kcal)	Fat Cal (kcal)	Protein (g)	Carb (g)	Total Fat (g)	Sat Fat (g)	Mono Fat (g)	Poly Fat (g)	Chol (mg)	Sodium (mg)	Fiber (g)
Fried Egg Pitas with Arugula	240	130	10	19	15	3	9	2.5	185	720	3
Tomato Toast with Olive Oil	280	60	9	44	7	1	5	1	0	1020	3
Pumpkin Seed, Walnut, and Blueberry Muesli	480	180	13	64	20	3	5	11	0	0	10
Toast with Cheddar and Chutney	260	90	10	34	10	6	2.5	0	30	420	6
ICE POPS, P. 73											
Strawberry-Cherry Ice Pops	90	0	1	21	0	0	0	0	0	10	2
Kiwi-Strawberry Ice Pops	90	5	1	21	0	0	0	0	0	10	2
Papaya-Tangerine Ice Pops	70	0	0	19	0	0	0	0	0	10	1
SKILLET COBBLERS, P. 78											
Vanilla-Fig Cobbler with Spiced Shortbread Topping	480	210	5	66	24	12	9	1.5	115	180	5
Blackberry-Peach Cobbler with Buttermilk Biscuits	330	100	4	56	11	7	3	0.5	25	290	4
Plum Cobbler with Honey and Lavender Biscuits	380	130	4	64	14	9	4	0.5	40	190	3
Pluot-Blueberry Cobbler with Coconut Dumplings	580	250	7	80	28	20	5	1	85	310	4
TEST KITCHEN, P. 87											
Tapenade (per 1 Tbs.)	70	50	3	2	5	1	4	0.5	5	580	0

The nutritional analyses have been calculated by a registered dietitian at Nutritional Solutions in Melville, New York. When a recipe gives a choice of ingredients, the first choice is the one used. Optional ingre-

dients with measured amounts are included; ingredients without specific quantities are not. Analyses are per serving; when a range of ingredient amounts or servings is given, the smaller amount or portion

is used. When the quantities of salt and pepper aren't specified, the analysis is based on ¼ tsp. salt and ½ tsp. pepper per serving for entrées, and ½ tsp. salt and ½ tsp. pepper per serving for side dishes.



WHERE TO BUY IT

french fries, p. 28

- Kuhn Rikon vegetable peeler, \$3.95, chefsresource.com, 866-765-2433.
- Pyrex 4-cup measuring cup, \$6.79, shopworldkitchen.com, 800-999-3436.
- White flour sack kitchen towels, \$9.95 for three, crateandbarrel .com, 800-967-6696.
- Fox Run 8-quart stainless-steel bowl, \$12.09, amazon.com, 866-216-1072.

From broadwaypanhandler.com, 866-266-5927:

- Wearever half sheet pans, \$16.95.
- Wüsthof Classic Ikon 8-inch chef's knife, \$200.

From cooking.com, 800-663-8810:

- Oxo Good Grips medium utility cutting board, \$14.99.
- All-Clad 6-quart stockpot, \$171.95.
- Wok strainer, \$17.95.
- Taylor candy, canning, and deepfry thermometer, \$10.95.

taco night, p.56

- Ascutney double old-fashioned glass, \$55 each, simonpearce .com, 800-774-5277.
- David Stark canvas runners, \$29, westelm.com, 888-922-4119.

From crateandbarrel.com, 800-967-6696:

- Two-piece Olivier serving set, \$54.95.
- Diego dishtowel, \$4.95.
- $\bullet \ {\bf Ruffle\ dip\ bowl}, \$7.95.$

From macys.com, 800-289-6229:

- Fiesta dinnerware, \$50 for four-piece place setting.
- Jardine nested bowls, \$22 for three-piece set.

From mexgrocer.com, 877-463-9476:

- Jarritos tamarindo soft drink, \$1.99 for 12.5 oz.
- Maseca corn flour, \$7.95 for 4.4 lb.
- 7-inch cast-iron tortilla press, \$17.95.

Location courtesy of Thomas McMackin, Woodbury, Connecticut.

ice pops, p.73

Prairie Moon 10-pop,
 2.5-oz. (about ½-cup)
 molds, \$19.95, prairiemoon
 biz, 866-331-0767.

tomatoes, p.44

• Pillivuyt round serving platter, \$44, 125west.com, 888-921-9378.

bouillabaisse, p.50

- Rösle food mill, \$117, rosleusa .com, 302-326-4801.
- Oxo Good Grips food scale, \$50, oxo.com, 800-545-4411.

gluten-free pancakes, p.34

From bobsredmill.com, 800-349-2173:

- Brown rice flour, \$3.49 for 1.5 lb.
- Almond meal, \$11.69 for 1 lb.

test kitchen, p.87

- Burrata, \$11.95 for 8 oz., ideal cheese.com, 800-382-0109.
- Stovetop pepper and tortilla roaster, \$15.95, surlatable.com, 800-243-0852.
- Weber rib rack, \$15.99, store weber.com, 800-446-1071.
- Za'atar, \$3.99 for 3 oz., kalustyans.com, 800-352-3451.



Labor Day Celebration

Margarita-Glazed Baby Back Ribs page 42

Grilled Corn

page 33

Southwestern-Style Potato Salad FineCooking.com

> Blackberry Fool page 22

To drink: Captain Lawrence Brewing Company's Xtra Gold American Style Trippel Ale

Sandwich Suppers

Smoky Grilled Meatball Subs page 21

Grilled Spinach and Radicchio Salad FineCooking.com

Garlic-Rubbed Grilled Cheese with Prosciutto and Tomatoes

page 22

Romaine Hearts with Lemon Vinaigrette and Shaved Parmesan

FineCooking.com

Open-Face Grilled Eggplant Sandwiches with Olive-Walnut Relish

page 67

Grilled Tomatoes with Saba and Sea Salt





Southern Barbecue Grilled Okra with Smoked Paprika-Shallot Dip page 12 Bourbon-and-Vanilla-Brined Pork Chops page 38 Cider and Bacon Baked Beans FineCooking.com Quick-Sautéed Collard Ribbons FineCooking.com Blackberry-Peach Cobbler with Buttermilk Biscuits page 80 To drink: Flying Dog Brewery In-Heat Wheat Hefeweizen

Dinner Party for Eight

Bistro Salad with Warm Goat Cheese

FineCooking.com

Bouillabaisse page 52

Lemon Tart with Walnut Crust FineCooking.com

To drink: Domaine du Bagnol 2010 Cassis Rosé



All-American Lunch

Bacon Burgers with Bacon-Onion-Balsamic Jam

page 39

French Fries

page 29

Kicked-Up Ketchup FineCooking.com

Strawberry-Cherry Ice Pops

page 77

To drink: Brooklyn Brewery's Classic Lager



Dinner from the Farmers' Market

Summer Corn Soup with Crisp Prosciutto and Basil

FineCooking.com

Sourdough Panzanella with Grilled Chicken

page 20

Plum Cobbler with Honey and Lavender Biscuits

page 83

To drink: Château Peyrassol 2010 Côtes de Provence Rosé Photographs by Scott Phillips; wine recommendations by Patrick Watson at Smith & Vine, Brooklyn, New

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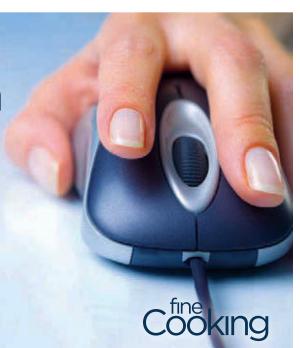
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